THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST

VOLUME ONE

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THE LIFE & TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD

VOLUME I

TO THE BLESSED
VIRGIN MARY
MOTHER OF GOD

THE LIFE & TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD

By

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Translated from the French

"Now this is eternal life: That they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."
(John xvii, 3.)

VOLUME I

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FOREWORD

THE work now offered to the reader is the fruit of teaching given at the *Institut Catholique*, in Paris, during the last ten years.

When, in 1917, I took over the course of *History of Christian Origins*, Cardinal Amette asked me to choose as the subject of my lectures the Life and Gospel of our Blessed Lord. My audience consisted mostly of Christians, who looked to me for an historical study, and not for a demonstration of the Truth on apologetic lines, of which their faith had no need. They wished to gain a closer knowledge of their Master, as revealed in His life and teaching, in the training of His apostles, and the foundation of His Church.

This was to be the end of all my efforts and in striving to attain it I have left on one side many studies that might have cleared the reader's path, or cast light upon his way. Such preparatory studies are assumed here, and have in fact been pursued elsewhere, in books of outstanding worth. If anyone desires to make himself acquainted with the proofs of our Lord's mission and of His Divinity he will find them in Fr. Grandmaison's authoritative work, *Jésus Christ*. If it be wished to study the Four Gospels, their claim to our acceptance, and the peculiar characteristics of each, all this can be seen in *L'Evangile et les Evangiles*, by Fr. Huby : while those who wish to go more closely into exegesis, may well put themselves under the guidance of Fr. Lagrange. His great commentaries will enable the reader to follow the sacred text verse by verse ; while in his book *L'Evangile de Jésus Christ* will be found gathered together the fruits of his long labours, through which all the scenes and words of our Lord's life are made to stand out, as it were, in a vivid light. Apart from these learned works, those acquainted with the series *Verbum Salutis* will already know something of the commentaries of Frs. Huby,

Durand, and Valensin, modest but full of sap, in which they can taste the essence of the Gospel itself.

I hope that my book even coming after such as these will not be without its use. My readers must not look for a commentary on the Gospel as a whole. The text, already transcribed in other volumes of the series, will be here briefly recalled ; sufficiently, however, to make the book complete in itself. The effort will be, not to solve the exegetical problems raised by a study of the text, but to put in clearer light the historical facts that it enshrines. And here, once more, all our attention will be concentrated on the Person of Christ. No doubt it is of great interest to penetrate into the social environment in which He moved, to describe the land where He lived, the towns, the synagogues, the lake ; and, on yonder height, dominating all Judea, the sumptuous mass of the Temple, with the city crowded around its base. When travelling in Palestine, I have contemplated these sacred spots with an emotion that has remained with me ever since ; and I have consulted the ancient texts, and the works of archæologists and historians in order to reconstruct that Jewish world that was broken in pieces by the catastrophe of A.D.70, and for all time. Of this work I have here reproduced no more than was necessary to give reality and solidity to the work we have in hand. This was all that was asked of me by my hearers of the *Institut Catholique*. They wanted to know the Gospel story and not Palestinian archæology or the moral and religious customs of the Jew. Still, for those who wish to pursue these studies there is no lack of guides ; they will be mentioned in the course of this work.

' Now this is eternal life : that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' These words of our Lord, among the most solemn in the Gospel, are set as an epigraph at the head of this book, for they express my whole purpose in writing it. To know Christ our Lord and to comprehend Him, so far as the Holy Spirit gives us the grace to do so, has been all that I have attempted in these conferences of the last ten years ; it is the only aim of this book. Certainly these lectures are not homilies, or religious meditations ; they are historical studies, but undertaken and carried on in the light of the Faith. On the last day of His life, Jesus said to one of His apostles : ' Have I been so long a time with you and have

you not known me, Philip? He that seeth me seeth the Father also.'

If ours is a true knowledge of Christ, it is to that point that we must come, and then, as sings Holy Church, there will be revealed to us

In Patre totus filius
Et totus in Verbo Pater.

Then will shine upon us: 'the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour' (Tit. iii, 4). And there is no vision to be compared to that.

PARIS.

Feast of the Ascension,
29*th of May*, 1930.

INTRODUCTION

THE Gospels are our principal source for the life of Christ. It is not our present task to establish their authenticity and historical value ; but we may briefly recall their origin and character.[1] Such a preliminary study will help us to understand both the form under which the Gospels have come down to us, and the purpose that they serve, thus making it easier for us to judge what precisely it is that we are meant to learn from them.

We must not regard the Gospels as literary works sprung from the initiative of one or more writers, or as the original creation of the author whose name they bear, Matthew, Mark, Luke, or even John ; rather they are the substance of the catechetical instruction of many years, consigned to writing in the end. So Clement of Alexandria, in a fragment preserved by Eusebius (H.E., VI, 14), writes : ' Since Peter preached the word of God publicly at Rome, and expounded the Gospel under the inspiration of the Spirit, his numerous hearers requested Mark—as one who had long been Peter's companion, and remembered the instruction that he gave—to put in writing what he had taught. This Mark did, thus presenting the Gospel teaching to those who had asked him for it. When Peter became aware of the fact, he said nothing either to encourage Mark or to restrain him.' Similarly, the anonymous author of the Muratorian canon explains how the Fourth Gospel came to be compiled by S. John : 'On receiving the request of his fellow-disciples and brother-bishops, John said : Fast with me for three days (from) to-day, and whatever is revealed to each or any of us, let us relate it. That same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that with the help of the revision of all, John should put everything into writing in his own name. . . .' (*tr.* L. de Grandmaison, loc. cit., p. 135).

Clement of Alexandria's story like that of the Muratorian

[1] Cp. L. de Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ*, I, pp. 38–56, on ' the literary character of our Gospels.'

canon is mingled with legendary details, but it bears witness to the memory of catechetical instruction as preceding any written account and as for a long time preferred to it. On this point the first followers of the Apostles shared the opinion of Papias (quoted by Eusebius, H.E., III, 39, 4) : ' I thought that I could never gain such profit from books as from the living and abiding word.'[1] And, as a matter of fact, it was in the form of oral catechetical instruction that, from the earliest days of the Church, the Apostles handed on the message of Christ. They were indeed its accredited witnesses, a function that they had received from our Lord Himself. (Luke xxiv, 48 ; Acts i, 8.)

Fidelity to this testimony entrusted to them was their first duty (Acts ii, 32 ; iii, 15 ; v, 32 ; x, 39, 41 ; xiii, 31). Even before Pentecost, when it became necessary to choose someone from among the disciples to replace Judas and so become the twelfth Apostle, it was laid down as an indispensable condition that he should have followed the Redeemer in His public ministry from the baptism of John until the Ascension itself. (Acts i, 21, 22.)

This testimony appears as collective from the start. Not isolated individuals, but the whole band of Apostles recount the life and teaching of the Master, with whom they ' ate and drank ' during the whole of His public life. None the less, certain personalities stand out more clearly in this company than others. Thus from the first days of the Church, Peter, Chief of the Twelve, appears as their mouthpiece, thus filling a place of the first importance in the formation of the evangelical tradition. In S. Mark's Gospel, especially, his personality is prominent both in the vivid freshness of the Galilean narrative and in the reserve which characterized all reference to himself. In the Fourth Gospel, similar characteristics, but still more pronounced, betray the ' disciple that Jesus loved,' for although S. John never names himself and is equally reticent about his brother James, his father Zebedee and his mother Salome, he sets down his memories with an incomparable vitality of style which reveals his authorship on every page.

In our Lord's public life, the whole of which took place under the eyes of the Apostles, certain facts stand out in a stronger light than others. In the highest degree decisive

[1] On this subject of preference for oral tradition, Clement of Alexandria should be read (*Strom.*, V, 10, 11, 60–77).

in character, they are naturally selected as subjects of testimony. First among these are the Passion and Resurrection ; then certain more solemn revelations of the nature and mission of the Son of God, such as were given at our Lord's baptism, at Cæsarea Philippi, and on the Mount of Transfiguration. And then, as at once the setting and the interpretation of these great events, the life and teaching of Christ in general is set before us in the light of the testimony of the Father Himself, ' by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did by him in the midst of you.' (Acts ii, 22.)

Later on, to the memories of the twelve Apostles will be added that of further witnesses of our Lord's life—such as His Blessed Mother and other members of His family to whom we owe the Infancy narratives ; or the disciples of Emmaus in the story recorded by S. Luke. But these personal recollections themselves are handed down to us in the Gospel, on the collective authority of the Church herself.

This decisive part played by the Church in the origin and development of the tradition of Gospel fact has never been lost sight of by Catholic theologians ; but it has often been misunderstood by Protestants. Indeed one of their writers has recently acknowledged as much :

' Since the Reformation,' says O. Cullmann,[1] ' our conception of the origin of the Gospels has taken a false turn. The Reformers drew conclusions of the most extreme kind concerning the New Testament Canon as a consequence of making verbal inspiration the most essential dogma of their faith. While in the ranks of Catholicism, the fact that tradition preceded scripture has never been wholly forgotten, the theologians of the Protestant world have ignored the fact that between the life of Christ and the composition of the Gospels there was a period of at least thirty years, during which no written ' Life of Christ ' had as yet appeared. It is a striking thing to notice that it was precisely the most liberal of the theologians of the second half of the nineteenth century who were, unconsciously, most under the influence of the theory of verbal inspiration, taking into account the written records alone and ignoring the important period when the Gospel existed only under the form of the spoken word.'

We may remark further that often the reaction which is

[1] In the *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, V (1925), p. 460.

taking place to-day tends to the other extreme. For while those Protestant theologians who see in the traditional Gospel story merely a creation of the Christian community itself, are willing to concede to us that the personality of Christ is reached only through the faith of the Church, this expression conveys to them something very different from what it does to ourselves. For us, the Church *bears witness* of Christ; for them this mind of the Church has created, if not the historic personality of Christ, at least Christ as the Messias and the Son of God. For us, the Gospels are historical narratives, sprung from the apostolic catechesis and bearing marks and guarantees of the witness borne to their Master by the twelve; for them, they are creations of the primitive community as at once an expression and a defence of its worship and its faith. The theories of these historians are at one with our traditional theses in making the Gospels the work of the Church; but they part company from them when they separate the Church from Jesus Christ.

It is not our business here to refute the theological errors that spring from these erroneous views or to vindicate the essential bond that unites the Church to Christ, but we must briefly notice the historical conclusions drawn from their theories by our opponents themselves. In their view the Gospel narratives are merely liturgical fragments with no chronological connection at all; mere detached readings, they are vaguely introduced by an indeterminate phrase —'*in illo tempore*'—and it is mere waste of time to seek to discover any real connection between the events to which they refer, or any real sequence of ideas or facts. Even if the reality of the incidents themselves be admitted, we must give up all attempt to weave them into history or to reconstruct a life of Christ.

Thus, K. L. Schmidt, concluding his long study of our Lord's life, writes: 'To sum up, no such thing as a life of Christ exists in the sense of a connected biographical narrative: or even a chronological outline of His life; we have merely isolated events, selected narratives, subsequently set in a literary framework.'[1] No doubt Schmidt would admit that these extracts were originally placed in due order of context and time; but he thinks that the primitive Christian community, solely preoccupied with

[1] *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* (Berlin, 1919), p. 317.

religious instruction, lost sight of these data and left the order of events in a state of confusion from which it has never been extricated since.

These pessimistic conclusions would seem too confident, coming from historians who are ready to attribute to the primitive Church not only the elaborations, but the very creation of the Gospel stories. They fail to see that this theory in itself is a bar to all approach to the real history of our Lord.[1] All the same, such discussions are not without their use, since they remind us of the supremely important part played by the Church in the elaboration of the tradition later embodied in the Gospels, and enable us to understand better the true character of the narratives, both in their spiritual richness and their fragmentary character as historical records.

Towards the end of his Gospel S. John writes (xx, 30, 31) : ' Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God : and that believing you may have life in His name.' And what is so explicitly stated by S. John is equally assumed by the Synoptical writers. It is never their object to satisfy the curiosity of their readers, but to kindle their faith. That was the purpose of the catechetical system of the primitive Church, on which the story of the written Gospels is based, and it was that motive that determined their character and its own.

A very brief survey of the Four Gospels will make this essentially religious character of the narrative clear. The good news that is its burden is salvation, and its whole tendency is to place in the forefront our Redeemer's person, teaching, and redemptive work.

[1] In 1929, Schmidt published a long article, ' Jesus Christus,' in the encyclopædia *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Tübingen, Mohr), col. 110–51. The method that we have criticized is rigorously applied. We know nothing of Christ except what the Church has made of Him, and the Church from the very beginning had only one idea about Him, namely, that He was God made man. His whole history is seen through a dim light where pass nameless impersonal forms, and not creatures of flesh and blood (col. 115 ff.). Cp. *Rech. de Science Religieuse*, 1929, p. 382. This method of *Formgeschichte* has been set forth by O. Cullmann, *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, V (1925), pp. 459–77, 564–79 ; and M. Dibelius, *Theologische Rundschau*, I (1929), pp. 185–216. In the last article an extensive bibliography will be found. For criticisms of the method, it will be useful to refer to M. Goguel's articles in the *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 94 (1926), pp. 114–60, and *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, 8 (1928), pp. 113–48.

And this explains the essential importance attached to the Passion, the prospect of which was unbearable to the Apostles during our Lord's life, filling them with revolt and fear. But, after Pentecost, they turned away their eyes from it no more; with S. Paul they could all say that they knew nothing but Christ and Him crucified. That terrible day of Jesus' death is the only one described by all four evangelists, and then with such details as to form a quarter of the whole Gospel story itself.

Nor is the Resurrection less important in the scheme of salvation, and we find it similarly related by all four evangelists. But of the many appearances of our Lord by which it is attested, only a selection is recorded in each Gospel, the narrative in each case sufficing to establish and enkindle our faith, but being in no way designed to satisfy our curiosity.

And it is the same with our Lord's public ministry. The heavenly message of which He was the bearer, the new law that He came to enact, the miracles that He wrought in such abundance to heal men's souls and bodies and set the Divine seal upon His mission : all this can be seen clearly enough through the medium of the Gospel pages, but only in fragments. The evangelists knew better than we the gaps in their narrative. He among them who knew the Master best, tells us quite simply that if anyone wished to write the whole of our Lord's life, the world itself would be too small to contain the books that would result (John xxi, 25). But S. John knew quite well that it is not the mere amassing of incidents that best reveals the Son of God, but their truth and depth. Those recorded were selected by the Holy Ghost and owe to Him their illuminating power ; such, for example, are the Sermon on the Mount and the parables of the kingdom in S. Matthew ; the instructions given at Capharnaum and by the Lake as recorded in S. Mark ; the parables of mercy and the stories of our Lord's childhood in S. Luke ; and the discourses at Jerusalem and in the Upper Room that come to us from S. John.

The narratives of the Infancy to which we have just referred, are distinguished from the rest in origin and character alike. They had no part in the primitive catechesis, which followed Jesus from the baptism of John to the Ascension (Acts i, 22) ; but it was not long before the piety of the faithful wished to go further back and find new

food for contemplation in our Redeemer's earliest years. It was then that these narratives, which so far had been kept as family secrets, became the common property of the Church, while still preserving, especially in S. Luke, their intimate and confidential character ; while here also it is only certain incidents that they reveal to us, appearing here and there, in the shadow and mystery of these thirty years.

These considerations already introduce a fact that will become clearer a little later, namely, that the historical aspect of the primitive catechesis, but little prominent at first, grew more and more in importance as time went on.[1] Thus, S. Matthew, in the first part of his Gospel, quite often forsakes the chronological order to follow one better adapted to the end he has in view; S. Mark follows the chain of events much more closely, especially in his account of the Galilean ministry, and we owe it to him that we are able to reconstruct in its main lines this period of capital importance in our Lord's life. By the time we reach S. Luke we find that it is this very concern for historical information that has led him to the researches mentioned in his preface, and it is to this we owe so many precious details relating to the Judean ministry, the Passion, the appearances after the Resurrection, and, above all, the infancy of our Lord. With S. John the chronological method is still more in evidence, while, in addition, topographical features are dwelt on with a precision which we should look for in the other Gospels in vain.

These remarks will be illustrated more than once in the course of the present work. For the Galilean ministry we shall follow S. Mark in his chronological method ; more especially in the history of the calling of the Apostles, where S. Peter's recollections are the most authoritative source. We shall place the origin of the *Pater noster* not, like S. Matthew, in the Sermon on the Mount, but later, following S. Luke (xi, 2–4). Similarly with S. John (ii, 14–22), we shall put the cleansing of the Temple at the beginning of the public ministry,[2] and not in the last week, as the Synoptics

[1] This has been already observed by Cornely, in his *Synopsis* (Introduction, p. 277) ; and repeated by Lagrange, *Revue biblique*, 1926, p. 614.

[2] As we shall see later, against this date, which seems to us more probable, there are not wanting objections of some weight, based on the synoptic account. These have led several commentators either to admit two cleansings, or while admitting one only, to date it in the last week of our Lord's life.

seem to do (Matt. xxi, 12, 13 ; Mark xi, 15–17 ; Luke xix, 45, 46). For the rest, this dislocation in the narrative of the Synoptics is to be explained by the traditional plan of instruction adopted by the first evangelists, in which the Galilean ministry is related immediately after the Baptism of our Lord, without inserting His journey to Jerusalem in this central narrative. This does not mean that they were ignorant of these expeditions to the Holy City (Matt. xxiii, 37 ; Luke xiii, 34) ; but that all the references to them in their respective Gospels are to be found grouped together at the end.[1]

At the same time it cannot be said that the hints as to chronology given by the last two evangelists are sufficient to remove all obscurity from the subject ; and indeed neither John nor Luke claim to do anything of the kind. Further, so far as S. Luke is concerned, it must be remembered that he commenced his work at a date when the memories of the Christian community were becoming less precise. In this connection we may especially notice the indeterminate references to dates and places in the nine chapters (ix, 51—xviii, 14) which form what is often called the ' journey narrative,' and which is really a collection of incidents and discourses to a large extent peculiar to the third Gospel. In these moving stories and parables, unrecorded elsewhere, Christian piety finds incomparable treasures : the Good Samaritan, Martha and Mary, the cry of the poor woman who called the Mother of Christ blessed (' Blessed is the womb that bore thee . . .') and the Saviour's reply, the Prodigal Son, Lazarus and Dives, the Pharisee and the publican—all come before us in so soft and penetrating a light that the mind never wearies of contemplating them. But we meet with serious difficulty when we try to put these events in their true setting of place and date. ' In vain,' says Lagrange, ' do we try to find out where the scene is laid in this part of S. Luke's narrative ; we only know that we are still in the land of Israel, since there is nothing to show that we have left it ; but there are no other indications of place. Apart from this we might be anywhere.[2]

[1] Great stress has been laid by M. Levesque on this fourfold scheme (the baptism, Galilee, the journey to Jerusalem and the last week) in *Nos quatre évangiles* (Paris, 1917), pp. 50 ff.

[2] Lagrange, *Evangile selon Saint Luc*, p. 38.

Some points in what is otherwise obscure are cleared up by S. John : for example, the village where Martha and Mary lived is in S. Luke (x, 33) a village without a name, *quoddam castellum;* but S. John gives both its name, Bethania, and its situation : 'near Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.'[1] But, although relieved by a few details such as these, a general lack of precision characterizes the narrative. The reason lies in the state of the traditions collected by S. Luke. Fr. Buzy, rejecting the theory that we can distinguish three journeys of our Lord in the third Gospel, writes :[2] 'If it is asserted that S. Luke alludes to several pilgrimages to Jerusalem, how do we know that he intended to provide a methodical account of each ? And even if he wished to, could he, considering the admitted lack of interest in chronological detail of the companions of Jesus and of the first generations of Christian people ? And if he could, would he have presented these incidents in the chaotic form in which we find them here ? '

These preliminary remarks bring us face to face with a fact which will become clearer as we go on. The apostolic tradition, as it is crystallized in the Gospels, shows us Jesus as the Messias and the Son of God, and supplies an assured foundation for our faith ; but it has not handed down to us a record of His life into which we can fix every detail in its proper place and with its appropriate date. And our study of the subject, unless it is to lose itself in vain conjectures, must assimilate the character of the documents upon which it is based, and will therefore be much more a religious study than a biography in the strict sense.

In the light of these remarks we must outline the historic setting of the life of Christ, and its chronology first of all.

In the course of our inquiry we shall obtain light from two series of historical facts—one peculiar to the Gospel narrative, the other borrowed from profane history.[3]

[1] John xi, 18. Cp. B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, p. 402.

[2] *Revue biblique*, 1918, p. 562. Cp. *infra*, Vol. II, p. 4.

[3] This distinction had long previously been made by the ancient Fathers ; for example, S. Augustine : 'Annorum quidem fere triginta baptizatum esse (Dominum) retinemus auctoritate evangelica (Luke iii, 23) ; sed postea quot annos in hac vita egerit, quamquam textu ipso actionum eius animadverti possit, tamen ne aliunde caligo dubitationis oriatur, de historia gentium collata cum Evangelio liquidius certiusque colligitur. Tunc enim videbitur non frustra esse dictum, quod quadraginta sex annis templum ædificatum sit . . .' (*De Doctrina Christiana*, ii, 28–42 ; P.L., XXXIV, pp. 55, 56.)

The following are the principal chronological data available :

1. The announcement of the Precursor's birth took place ' in the days of Herod ' (Luke i, 5), and ' the sixth month ' dating from this event witnessed the Annunciation (Luke i, 26). Jesus was born at Bethlehem of Juda ' in the days of King Herod ' (Matt. ii, 1). When the Magi arrived in Jerusalem and inquired as to where the King of the Jews is born, ' *King Herod* . . . was troubled and all Jerusalem with him ' (Matt. ii, 3). After the flight into Egypt, Herod being dead, ' behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying : Arise, and take the child and His Mother, and go into the land of Israel. . . . But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither : and being warned in sleep retired into the quarters of Galilee ' (Matt. ii, 19–22).

From all these passages it appears that Jesus was born in the reign of Herod. Now Herod died in the year 4 B.C.,[1] a few days before Passover (A.J., XVII, ix, 3 ; B.J., II, 1, 3), and a few days after an eclipse of the moon (A.J., XVII, vi, 4), to be dated probably on the 12th–13th March 4 B.C.[2] It must be added that, some time before his death, driven by sickness, Herod left Jerusalem for the springs of Callirhoe, going later to Jericho, where he died (A.J., XVII, vi, 5 ; B.J., I, xxiii, 5, 6). Now since the Magi found him in Jerusalem, their arrival there, as well as the birth of Christ, must be assigned to 5 B.C.

No doubt the sojourn of the Holy Family in Egypt was a very short one. In spite of the fact that Archelaus had inherited the title of king from Herod, Augustus would only concede him the position of ethnarch (A.J., XVII, xi, 4 ; B.J., II, vi, 3), so if we are to take the expression ' Archelaus reigned in Judea ' (Matt. ii, 22) literally, the return from Egypt must have taken place before Archelaus returned from Rome.

2. Another indication of date is to be found in Luke ii, i, 2 : ' And it came to pass that in those days there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This enrolling was first made by

[1] Schürer, *Geschichte des judischen Volkes*, I, pp. 415–17, following Josephus (A.J., XVII, vii, 1 ; B.J., I, xxxiii, 8).

[2] Schürer, p. 416; Otto, art. *Herodes*, in Pauly-Wissowa's *Real-Encylopaedie*, Supp., p. 143.

Cyrinus [Quirinius] the governor of Syria.'[1] From these data Dr. A. T. Headlam (*The Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ*, London, 1922, p. 318) reaches the following conclusion :

> ' The conclusion of the argument is that the Nativity was probably about 8 B.C., or perhaps, recognizing the possibility of delay in carrying out the Census, we might place it with Dr. Turner in 7 B.C.'

This discussion is of only secondary importance in the study of Jesus' life. As we have seen Jesus' birth cannot at the latest be put later than 5 B.C. ; although we may be led

[1] The fact referred to here as a chronological landmark has called forth innumerable explanations and discussions. The question has been treated with great thoroughness by Lagrange (*Revue biblique*, 1911, pp. 60–84, *Où en est la question du recensement de Quirinius ?*). In 1912, Sir William Ramsay discovered at Antioch in Pisidia an inscription which he published in *The Expositor* (1912, p. 401). This was reproduced in *Revue biblique* (1913, p. 617). If to these data we add a passage from Tertullian (adv. Marc., iv, 19) which places this enrolment under Sentius Saturninus we are led to the following theory : An incomplete inscription at Tibur, attributed by many since Mommsen to Cyrinus, goes to prove that he was twice Governor of Syria. (For a facsimile of this inscription see *Dict. de la Bible*, II, p. 1187; for commentary see Lagrange, *Saint Luc*, p. 66; also *Saint Luc*, by Valensin and Huby, p. 32 ; also article ' Epigraphie,' by P. Jalabert, *Dictionnaire Apologétique*, I, col. 1426.) The first of these two terms of office is dated by Sir William Ramsay, 10–8 B.C., and it would have been then that the enrolment mentioned by S. Luke would have taken place : see *The bearing of recent discovery on the trustworthiness of the New Testament* (London, 1920), pp. 223–300. Fr. Lagrange (*Saint Luc*, p. 66) acknowledges that ' his reasons are strong,' but adds : ' If we must put the birth of Christ so early, how was it that He was only thirty years old in the fifteenth year of Tiberius ? ' (Luke iii, 1). However, Ramsay is followed by a number of scholars : J. J. O'Rourke, *Census Quirinii Verbum Domini*, I (1921), pp. 206–11 ; E. Power, *Biblica*, I (1928), pp. 282 ff. Others suppose that the enrolment was postponed until 7 B.C. through the resistance of the population. So L. Fonck, *Verbum Domini*, VII (1927), pp. 369 ff., who assigns our Lord's birth to 7 B.C. In this view the passage in Tertullian would be taken to mean that the enrolment begun by Cyrinus in 8 B.C. would have been proceeded with by Saturninus, who was, perhaps, co-legate in 8 B.C. and then sole governor until 6 B.C. (Valensin-Huby, *Saint Luc*, p. 33).

To avoid having to accept these dates which seem to him too early, Lagrange translates Luke ii, 2, as follows : ' This enrolment was anterior to that made when Cyrinus was Governor of Syria.' This translation conveniently disposes of the historical difficulties, but is not easy to defend on philological grounds. Cp. E. Power, loc. cit., p. 286. Sickenberger (*Bibl. Zeitsch.*, XVI, 1924, 215) considers that recent discoveries have not established Cyrinus' government in the period 8–5 B.C., in which case, if S. Luke and history are to be harmonized, we must have recourse to the rendering proposed by Lagrange.

In *Revue biblique*, 1929, p. 449, Lagrange meets the objection raised by M. Groag against the earlier governorship of Cyrinus and Mommsen's interpretation of the inscription of Tibur. Against these objections Lagrange maintains his own translation of the passage from S. Luke.

by the date we adopt for the enrolment to place it two or three years earlier, say 7 or 8 B.C., the only result being that it will be necessary to interpret Luke iii, 23, in a rather wider sense.

3. Luke iii, 1, 2. 'Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip his brother tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilina, under the high priests Annas and Caiphas: the word of the Lord was made unto John the son of Zachary, in the desert.'

The care taken by S. Luke to enumerate the persons contemporary with the commencement of the Baptist's ministry clearly shows his intention once for all to fix the date of that event as that of the beginning of the era of the Gospel preaching (Acts i, 22). The most precise of these dates is the first mentioned 'the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar,' . . . 'the only fixed date definitely assigned to any event in the New Testament' (Headlam, loc. cit., p. 319). However, the allusion in question can be understood in more ways than one. Augustus died on the 19th of August 767 A.U.C., or A.D. 14; but two years previously Tiberius had been associated with him on the Imperial throne, consequently, the fifteenth year of Tiberius' reign must be reckoned from the 19th of August A.D. 28 to the 19th of August A.D. 29, if the starting-point is the death of Augustus; but two years earlier if it is the accession of Tiberius to power in the capacity of *collega imperii*. These dates are still liable to some revision,[1] for in Syria the year began on October 1, and if S. Luke conformed to this usage, he may have regarded the second year of Tiberius as beginning on October 1, A.D. 12 or 14, and the fifteenth on October 1, A.D. 25 or 27.[2]

4. Luke iii, 23: where we are told that at the time of His baptism, Jesus was 'about the age of thirty years.'

If our Lord was born in the year 7 before our era, He would have been thirty-three years old in A.D. 26, on which hypothesis there is no difficulty in understanding

[1] Cp. C. Cichorius, *Chronologisches zum Leben Jesu. Z.n.t.W.*, xxii, 16–20. *Bibl. Zeitschr.*, 1924, p. 255.

[2] Cp. Turner, art. 'Chronology,' *Dict. of the Bible*, I, pp. 405–6; Prat, *La date de la Passion et la durée de la vie publique de J.C., Rech. de Sc. Rel.*, 1912, pp. 101–3; Lagrange, *Saint Luc*, pp. 99, 100; Valensin-Huby, pp. 53, 54.

S. Luke. This, however, is less easy if we identify the fifteenth year of Tiberius with the year A.D. 29, assigning our Lord's nativity to 8 B.C. Father Power (*Biblica*, 1926, pp. 282–284), following Ramsay ('*The bearing of recent discovery on the trustworthiness of the New Testament*,' p. 295), thinks this objection can be met if we remember that 'according to Jewish custom, the age of thirty had to be attained before a man could enter public life; so that by the expression "thirty years" S. Luke meant that our Lord had attained the legal age before His public ministry began.' This is interesting and may have been what S. Luke meant; but I doubt if it would have justified the expression used by him: it is not easy to understand ὡσεὶ τριάκοντα of thirty-six or thirty-seven.

5. John ii, 20: '. . . . six and forty years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?' These are words spoken by the Jews to Jesus at the first Passover of His public ministry.

Josephus assigns the commencement of the building of the temple to the eighteenth year of Herod's reign (A.J., XV, xi, 1), and this is confirmed by the coincidence of this date with Augustus' visit to Syria, which Dion Cassius (liv, 7) puts in the spring or summer of 20 B.C. (cp. Schürer, 1, p. 369). On the strength of these two passages we must correct what Josephus has written elsewhere (B.J., I, xxi, 1), where he dates the foundation of the temple in the fifteenth year of Herod's reign (cp. Schürer, loc. cit.; Turner, p. 405). If we reckon 46 years from 20 B.C. we arrive at A.D. 27 (A.U.C. 780) which confirms the date suggested above (cp. Prat, loc. cit., p. 103).[1]

6. Duration of the Public Ministry.

[1] Father Power (*Biblica*, 1928, pp. 258–77) has suggested quite a different interpretation of this passage. After remarking that the reference here is not to the Temple (ἱερόν) but to the sanctuary (ναός) he sets out to show (pp. 274 ff.) that the ναός was the first part of the Temple to be rebuilt by Herod, and that the work took one year and five months, having been begun in March, 18 B.C., and finished about July, 17 B.C. (p. 277). On this assumption he translates: 'This sanctuary was built forty-six years ago, and do you claim to be able to rebuild it in three days!' Counting forty-six years from July, 17 B.C., we arrive at July, A.D. 30, which will be the year in which the incident in question occurred.

This explanation is grammatically defensible, but is scarcely satisfactory in itself. What the Jews found difficult to believe was that a structure *that had taken forty-six years to build* could be rebuilt in three days, not that this should be the case with one that *had been built forty-six years before*. It is two periods of time that are to be compared, and not two dates.

Having thus approximately dated the beginning of our Lord's public ministry, it remains to determine its length.[1]

The text of S. John's Gospel, if taken as it stands, requires a minimum of two years and some months for the public ministry. After the miracle at Cana 'the pasch of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem' (ii, 13); 'when he was at Jerusalem at the pasch upon the festival day' (ii, 23). After this Passover, which was the first of the

[1] There is an immense literature on this subject. We mention only C. H. Turner, *Chronology of the New Testament*, Dictionary of the Bible, I, pp. 403–15, and especially pp. 406–15. (According to this author the duration of the ministry was two years and some months; the date of the Passion, March 18, A.D. 29.)

F. Prat, *La date de la Passion et la durée de la vie publique de Jésus Christ. Rech. de sc. relig.*, 1912, pp. 82–104. (The same conclusion.)

E. Preuschen, *Todesjahr und Todestag Jesu. Z.n.t.W.*, V (1904), pp. 1–17. (Passion, April 7, A.D. 30.)

P. Ladeuze, *La date de la mort du Christ, d'après quelque études récentes, Revue d'Histoire ecclésiastique*, V (1904), pp. 893–903. (Ministry of three or four years; Passion, April 3, A.D. 33.)

E. Levesque, *Nos quatre évangiles, Paris*, 1917, pp. 78–90. (Ministry of three and a half years.)

L. Cl. Fillion, *Vie de N. S. Jésus Christ*, Paris, 1922, II, pp. 1–20. (Ministry of three and a half years; Passion, A.D. 30.)

M. Meinertz, *Methodisches und Sachliches ueber die Dauer der oeffentlichen Wirksamkeit Jesu. Biblische Zeitschrift*, XIV (1917), pp. 119–39, 236–49. (The theory of one year's ministry is untenable; a two years' ministry is possible if we accept the inversion of the present order of chapters v and vi of John; if not we must fall back on a ministry of three years.)

V. Hartl, *Die Hypothese einer einjaehrigen Wirksamkeit Jesu kritisch geprueft Ntl. Abhandl.*, vii, 1–3, Münster, 1917. The author concludes (p. 340) that the theory of a single year's ministry is untenable; but he reserves for further discussion the question whether we may be content with that of a two years' ministry, or must accept the hypothesis of a longer one. (Cp. *Bibl. Zeitschr.*, XV (1918), p. 166.)

J. B. Nisius, *Zur Kontroverse ueber die Dauer der oeffentlichen Wirksamkeit Jesu. Z.K.T.*, 1913, 3, pp. 457–503; a three years' ministry.

Cp. P. Dausch, *Neue Studien ueber die Dauer der oeffentlichen Wirksamkeit Jesu. Bibl. Zeitschr.*, XII (1914), pp. 158–67. (A critique of Nisius and Belser.)

H. A. Janssen, *De tijdrekening van Christus openbaar leven. Studien*, November 1914, pp. 350–374. (A two years' ministry.) If John v is in the right place, the 'feast' referred to is Tabernacles of the first year. John iv, 35, is a proverb; the journey through Samaria took place in summer. It is probable that the present order of John v and vi should be inverted (*Bibl. Zeitschr.*, 1915, p. 177).

Ami du clergé, August 16, 1928, pp. 545–9. (Certainly more than a year's ministry, probably two years and several months. Passion, March 18, A.D. 29, or April 7, A.D. 30.)

Dr. Wilhelm Homanner, *Die Dauer der oeffentlichen Wirksamkeit Jesu: Bibl. Studien*, XIII, 3, Freiburg, 1908; he concludes (p. 100) that the ministry lasted a little less than three years.

M. J. Pfaettisch, O.S.B., *Die Dauer der Lehrtaetigkeit Jesu nach dem Evangelium des hl. Johannes, Bibl. Studien*, xvi, 3, 4. Herder, 1911, concludes (p. 169) in favour of a ministry of two years, from the Passover of A.D. 28 to that of A.D. 30 (April 7).

public ministry, our Lord left Jerusalem, stayed some time in Judea (iii, 22) and then, crossing Samaria, returned to Galilee (iv, 3 ff.). At the beginning of chapter v a 'festival day' of the Jews is mentioned in connection with which our Lord 'went up to Jerusalem' (v, 1). In chapter vi, He is on the eastern shore of the lake, where He works the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand; 'now the Pasch, the festival day of the Jews, was nigh at hand' (vi, 4). Later, He went to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (vii, 2), and later still for that of the Dedication (x, 22); finally, 'six days before the Pasch,' He came to Bethania (xii, 1), entered Jerusalem (xii, 12), celebrated the Last Supper 'before the festal day of the pasch' (xiii, 1), and died the same day that the Passover was being eaten (xviii, 28).

It cannot be denied that in this narrative at least three Passovers can be distinguished; the first, at Jerusalem (ii); the second, on the shore of the lake (vi); and the third, that of the Passion itself, at Jerusalem (xiii–xviii).[1]

[1] S. Irenæus had already employed this argument against the Gnostics who wished to reduce the public ministry to a single year. It must be observed, however, that Irenæus reckons as a Passover the feast mentioned in Chapter V, but not that in Chapter VI. 'Et primum quidem ut fecit vinum ex aqua in Cana Galilææ, ascendit in diem festum Paschæ. . . . Et post hæc iterum secunda vice ascendit in diem festum Paschæ in Hierusalem, quando paralyticum . . . curavit. . . . Et iterum inde secedens trans mare Tyberiadis . . . de quinque panibus satiavit omnem illam multitudinem. . . . Deinde cum Lazarum suscitasset ex mortuis . . . secedit in Ephrem civitatem: et inde ante sex dies Paschæ veniens in Bethaniam scribitur, et de Bethania ascendens in Hierosolymam, et manducans Pascha, et sequenti die passus. Quoniam autem tria hæc Paschæ tempora non sunt unus annus, omnis quilibet confitebitur' (*Adv. Hær.*, ii, 22, 3; P.G., VII, 783).

On this passage of S. Irenæus, see J. Pfaettisch, O.S.B., *Die Dauer der Lehrtaetigkeit Jesu nach dem Evangelium des hl. Johannes: Bibl. Studien*, xvi, 3–4 (Freiburg, 1911), pp. 3–14. Origen's notes on John vi are lost, but in those on iv, 35 (*in Joannem*, xiii, 39, ed. Preuschen, p. 265), he does not seem to have noticed the mention of the Passover in vi, 4; and the same is true of S. Cyril of Alexandria *in Joannem*, iii (P.G., LXXIII, 441). On these two passages cp. Pfaettisch, pp. 15–30 and 30–44. Even if they prove conclusively that Irenæus, Origen and Cyril did not read τὸ πάσχα in John vi, 4, we could not on that ground decide against the authenticity of this reading attested as it is by all other ancient writers and by all the manuscrits.

Even if the correct reading were simply ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων we should have to understand these words as referring to the Passover, for the emphatic expression 'the festival day of the Jews' could not have been applied to any feast other than Passover or Tabernacles, and the Feast of Tabernacles is certainly excluded by the references to 'much' and 'green' grass contained in John vi, 10, and Mark vi, 39. The allusion to this kind of vegetation, so perishable in Palestine, certainly implies the spring season, and in this respect confirms the facts supplied by S. John.

Thus we are driven to require a minimum of two years and some months for our Lord's public ministry ; but it does not seem that we need go further and reckon its length as *three* years and some months.

Those who favour the hypothesis of a ministry of three complete years make use especially of two passages of S. John : iv, 35 and v, 1.

John iv, 35 : ' Do not you say, there are yet four months, and then the harvest cometh ? ' A considerable number of commentators[1] think we may conclude from this text that our Lord's return from Judea to Galilee, through Samaria, took place four months before the harvest, that is, in December. On this hypothesis, although not impossible, it is very difficult to reduce the public ministry to less than three years : ' from this return to the Feeding of the Five Thousand, which, on this theory, would coincide with the Second Passover, would only be three or four months—not enough time to explain the facts enumerated by the Synoptics as occurring before this great miracle took place ' (Levesque, *Nos quatre évangiles*, p. 89).

This interpretation does not lack probability ; but none the less is it faced with difficulties of a serious kind. This narrative of a journey through Samaria contains many features which ill accord with a journey in December, and which are much more suggestive of such a journey in summer. E.g. the overpowering fatigue that forced our Redeemer to sit down near Jacob's well (iv, 6) ; His request to the woman of Samaria (iv, 7) ; His promise of water that should for ever quench her thirst (iv, 14). Further, the enthusiastic welcome received by our Lord on His arrival in Galilee (iv, 45) sprang from the memory of what the Galileans had seen, quite recently, at the Passover feast. Consequently many scholars—Maldonatus, Tillemont, Westcott, Lagrange, Prat, and Origen before them all—understand the four months not as a chronological indication, but as a proverbial saying, and put the journey through

The previous incident of the plucking of the ears of corn by the disciples (Mark ii, 23, 24 ; Matt. xii, 1 ; Luke vi, 1–2) also occurred about the time of Passover and the succession of facts separating the two incidents helps to fix their dates respectively in the springs of two successive years ; being further examples of the way in which the synoptic narrative fits into the chronological framework of S. John.

[1] Zahn, Loisy, Bauer, Levesque, Sickenberger, etc. Hartl, *Die Hypothese . . .*, pp. 55–63, places this incident in February ; Pfaettisch, *Lehrtaetigkeit*, pp. 110–12, in December.

Samaria not in December, but in May, only a few weeks after the first Passover had taken place.

John v, 1. 'After these things was a festival day of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.' The question arises: What feast was this? S. Irenæus, in a passage quoted above, sees here an allusion to the Passover, and he is followed by a certain number of scholars, who are led by this view to distinguish four Passovers in S. John's narrative, including the feast mentioned in vi, 4, which Irenæus, as we have seen, does not regard as distinct from the Passover of v, 1. Consequently these authors are led to allow more than three years to the public ministry. However, this is not the most probable explanation of the matter. In the passage in question the evangelist speaks not of 'the feast,' but of 'a feast' (ἑορτή, not ἡ ἑορτὴ) which excludes any reference to the Passover, pre-eminently *the* feast. Many theories have been advanced as to what this unnamed feast really was; the Feast of Purim (March); of Trumpets (October); and of Pentecost, being among those suggested. It is not necessary to determine this point in order to settle the question with which we are concerned at the moment; with the certainty that the feast here referred to was not the Passover, the argument in favour of a three years' ministry sometimes drawn from this passage falls to the ground.[1]

While, therefore, these two passages of S. John (iv, 35 and v, 1) do not support the hypothesis of a ministry of more than three years, his narrative, taken as a whole, is definitely

[1] A considerable number of exegetes invert the order of chapters v and vi. This transposition of the two chapters is adopted without discussion by Ludolph the Carthusian, who, in his *Vita Christi*, I, c. 67, gives an account of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, and in commenting on John vi, '*erat autem proximum Pascha, dies festus Judæorum*,' writes: '*Istud erat secundum festum paschale, et in eo non fecit Dominus in Hierusalem.*' Further on (c. 78), in his notes on chapter v, he says: '*Post hæc ascendit Jesus in Hierusalem, ad diem festum Judæorum*,' '*scilicet Pentecostes.*'

This theory was defended by J. P. Norris in the *Journal of Philology*, 1871 (p. 107), and taken up by a good many scholars after him, e.g. H. A. Janssen, *Studien*, 1914, pp. 350–74; M. Meinertz, *Bibl. Zeitschr.*, XIV (1917), pp. 238–49; Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, p. 381; Lagrange, *S. Jean*, pp. cxx and 197; Olivieri, *Revue biblique*, 1926, p. 392; Bernard, *Saint John*, p. xvii. Durand (*S. Jean*, p. 138) writes: 'The theory of transposition is useful, but it would be excessive to put it forward as necessary.' Most scholars who accept the transposition in question, like Ludolph, identify the feast of chapter v with Pentecost. Bernard (p. 225) sees here a reference to the Passover of A.D. 28 following on its explicit mention in chapter vi: 'the Pasch was near at hand.'

against it. From the Baptism to the first Passover, the events recorded follow in so close a sequence that it is quite impossible to find room for an interval of any length. The enthusiastic welcome that He received from His fellow-countrymen upon His return to Galilee was largely inspired by their vivid recollection of the miracles worked by our Lord during the first Passover (iv, 45). Between this return and the last Passover but one (vi, 4) there are recorded only the cure of the centurion's servant at Capharnaum and that of the paralytic at the Pool of Bethsaida (v, 1–15) ; but this incident of the paralytic is closely connected with the Passover just mentioned, since it was because of this miracle that the Jews resolved to kill our Lord (v, 18), which is why He afterwards avoided going to Jerusalem and ' walked in Galilee,' ' because the Jews sought to kill Him ' (vii, 1).[1] From the Synoptics, even less than from S. John, do we get the impression of a ministry of long duration. In the first half of his Gospel (up to xi, 2) S. Matthew gathers together facts and sayings borrowed from all periods of our Lord's ministry without any intimations which might throw light on the order in which they occurred. In S. Mark, the last Passover but one, rendered remarkable by the Feeding of the Five Thousand, comes in the sixth chapter, and a year seems more than sufficient to account for events anterior to this date ; while S. Luke devotes nearly two-thirds of his Gospel to the last six months, the rest of the public ministry occupying not more than five or six chapters (iv, 14—ix, 51).[2]

The succession of events, during the course of these two years, is thus described by Lagrange in his *Synopse*. In January A.D. 28, Jesus was baptized and retired into the desert : in March He returned to the Jordan, visited Cana and Capharnaum ; went up to Jerusalem for the Passover, drove the traffickers out of the Temple, and preached throughout Judea. In May, John the Baptist was thrown into prison, and our Lord went to Nazareth and Capharnaum by way of Samaria. In June came the incidents of the disciples plucking the ears of corn, of the calling of the Apostles and the Sermon on the Mount. In November, we have the parable of the Sower ; in December, Jesus stilled the tempest and went to Nazareth for the second time.

[1] Prat, loc. cit., p. 89.
[2] Ibid., p. 88.

In February, A.D. 29, occurred the sending of the Apostles ; in March, the death of John the Baptist ; in April, the Feeding of the Five Thousand, shortly before Passover ; in June, Jesus went to Jerusalem for Pentecost and cured the paralytic ; then, crossing Phenice and Decapolis, He fed the Four Thousand and went to Cæsarea Philippi ; at the end of August the Transfiguration took place. In October, Jesus was at Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, where He cured the man born blind ; in December, He was there again for the Feast of the Dedication. In March, A.D. 30, He raised Lazarus, retired to Ephrem and returned to Jerusalem by Jericho. In April, at Passover, He was put to death.

Of course, this is a merely approximate outline, but it supplies a probable sketch of the development of our Lord's ministry, from the chronological point of view.[1]

7. The date of the Passion.

We have to determine : (*a*) The day of the week ; (*b*) the day of the month ; (*c*) the year.

(*a*) The day of the week of our Lord's Passion does not admit of doubt. The Synoptics and S. John all tell us that He died on a Friday : Matt. xxvii, 62 ; Mark xv, 42 ; Luke xxiii, 54 ; John xix, 31, and this joint witness is further confirmed by the most ancient Christian authorities. The Resurrection took place on a Sunday, and His death on a Friday ; hence the Friday abstinence to which the *Didache* (viii) already bears witness.[2]

(*b*) There is more discussion about the day of the month.[3] None the less, S. John's testimony on this point, too, is quite precise ; xviii, 28 ; *αὐτοὶ οὐκ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον, ἵνα μὴ*

[1] Cp. Turner, art. *Chronology*, p. 410.

[2] Westcott's peculiar view, which puts our Lord's death on a Thursday, must therefore be rejected. See *Introduction to the study of the Gospels*, p. 348. However, Ed. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfaenge*, I, pp. 169–72, thinks that primitive tradition assigned the death to Thursday and the Resurrection to Sunday.

[3] On this question cp. Lagrange, *Saint Marc*, pp. 354–63 ; *Saint Jean*, 469–71. J. Schneid, *Der Monatstag des Abendmahles und Todes unseres Herrn J. Ch.*, Ratisbon, 1905. B. Frischkopf, *Die Neusten Eroerterungen ueber die Abendmahlsfrage. Neutest. Abhandl.*, ix, 4, 5, Münster, 1921, pp. 53–85. D. Chwolson, *Das letzte Passahmahl Christi und der Tag seines Todes*, Leipzig, 1908. H. Simon, *Prælectiones biblicæ*, N.T., I, pp. 514–18, Turin, 1924. Pfaettisch, *Lehrtaetigkeit*, pp. 155–69 : 15 Nisan (April 7, A.D. 30). Ed. Meyer, op. cit., I, pp. 167–72 : 14 Nisan. Zahn, *Grundriss*, pp. 63–5 : 15 Nisan, A.D. 30. Billerbeck, *Die Angaben der vier Evangelien ueber den Todestag Jesu* (Kommentar, II, 812–53). F. Tillmann, *Das Johannesevangelium* (Bonn, 1931), pp. 310, 311.

μιανθῶσιν, ἀλλὰ φάγωσι τὸ πάσχα. It follows that Christ died on the day when the Passover was eaten, i.e., the 14th Nisan. This is confirmed by the narrative of the Last Supper, which took place on the eve of Passover, xiii, 1 : πρὸ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα and by the story of our Lord's death, xix, 31, the day after which was the great day of the Feast, the 15th Nisan : ἦν γὰρ μεγάλη ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνου τοῦ σαββάτου. Cp. Lagrange, *S. Jean*, pp. 469 ff., *S. Marc*, p. 355.

The Johannine tradition in this matter determined the Asiatic practice as to the observation of Easter followed by the Quartodecimans. Cp. Turner, p. 412 ; C. Schmidt, *Gespraeche Jesu mit seinen Jungern* (Leipzig, 1919), pp. 577–726. The same date (14) for Easter is assumed by S. Paul : Christ died on the day of the Pasch, 1 Cor. v, 7, and rose again on that of the first-fruits, i.e. 16th Nisan : ib., xv, 20 (Turner, ibid.).

On the other hand the Synoptics seem to state that Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples the day before His death. This point will be discussed later ;[1] in a contrary sense is the fact that certain features of their account show that the day of our Lord's death was a working day and therefore not 15th Nisan, the great day of the feast. Such limitations are the episode of Simon of Cyrene (Mark xv, 21 ; Matt. xxvii, 32 ; Luke xxiii, 26) ; and the taking of our Lord's Body down from the Cross (Mark xv, 42–46 ; Matt. xxvii, 57–60 ; Luke xxiii, 50–54).

(*c*) The year is settled by the facts already established. Our Lord died on a Friday, and on the 14th Nisan. Now the only possible dates on which both these conditions are fulfilled are 11 April, A.D. 27 ; 7 April, A.D. 30 ; and 3 April, A.D. 33.[2]

From what has gone before we are led to choose the second of these dates, and to conclude that Jesus died in A.D. 30.[3]

[1] Vol. II, chapter vi, § 1, *infra*.

[2] Cp. D. R. Fotheringham, *The date of Easter* (London, 1928), pp. 36 ff.

[3] Cp. K. Schoch, *Christi Kreuzigung am* 14 Nisan. *Biblica*, 1928, pp. 48–56. J. B. Schaumberger, *Der* 14 *Nisan als Kreuzigungstag und die Synoptiker*, ibid., pp. 57–77. J. M. Bover, *En qué año de Tiberio murió Jesu Cristo ? Analecta Sacra Tarraconensia*, VI (1930), pp. 41–60.

THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD

CHAPTER I

THE INFANCY

I. Nature and sources of the Gospel narratives.

We need do no more than glance at the Gospels to notice the very special character of the narratives that deal with our Lord's infancy and birth. These sections are entirely absent, not only from S. John, but also from S. Mark. They are found in S. Matthew and S. Luke, where they form a sort of introduction easily separated from the rest of the book. Further, the story as told by these two evangelists varies greatly, their narratives seeming to be derived from two sources quite different in themselves. There is nothing that need surprise us in all this. The apostolic catechesis, from which the Synoptic Gospels have sprung, had no other primary object than to relate the public ministry of Christ 'from the baptism of John until the day wherein he was taken up.' It is therefore only natural that S. Mark's Gospel should open with the mission of S. John the Baptist and end with the Ascension; or that in S. Matthew and S. Luke the ministry and baptism of the Precursor should appear on the first page of the book itself while our Lord's infancy and hidden life are related in a sort of prologue or introductory part.

The apostolic preaching and the faith of the first Christians had at first for their object the great mysteries of salvation, namely, our Lord's death and resurrection, as also His public ministry and teaching, determining Christian Faith and morals, and forming a revelation that was confirmed by the miracles He wrought. But very soon the piety of the

faithful began to thirst for knowledge of the early years of our Lord's life ; nor was information on this sacred subject difficult to obtain. The Mother of Jesus had survived Him, and was still the centre of the little band of holy women, several of whom had been with her at the foot of the Cross and had heard her speak of the birth, infancy and youth of their Divine Lord. And there were other members of His family still alive, those whom the Gospel calls the ' brethren of the Lord,' whose descendants would, later, in the second century, be objects of the veneration of the faithful of that time. It was only necessary to enter into this intimate circle to collect safe and detailed traditions of the Saviour's hidden life.

The Gospels themselves confirm what these historical probabilities suggest. We do not find, in their pages, those puerile and fantastic fancies that show that the imagination has been at work. Later on, popular piety, but little satisfied with the sober though touching facts of the Gospel story, would give free scope to its imagination, and multiply miracles about the path of the Infant Christ,[1] representing Him, for example, as modelling birds in clay which would fly away obediently when the Child clapped His hands. Another time, a boy who had accidentally hurt Him in some way is struck dead, while, on another occasion, when Jesus was riding a mule, the animal was suddenly freed from the evil spell cast upon him by someone, and reappears as a young man. In our Gospels this element of pretentious and puerile magic is totally lacking ; there are wonders, indeed, angelic appearances and others, but their only purpose is to guide the Magi, to summon the Shepherds to the manger, to rescue the Holy Child from danger of death. In the imminent peril in which the Christ-Child lay through Herod's fury it is by no deed of power that He escapes, but, like any poor and feeble babe, by humble flight. From His birth on, we find the same surroundings of poverty and humility—a hired stable, a handful of straw, swaddling clothes, all the lowly equipment which Marcion of old found so revolting to his pride. It is not this kind of magnificence that would have been imagined by the mind of man.

In S. Luke's Gospel we have the story of the conception and birth of the Precursor, forecasting the Incarnation and Nativity of Christ Himself. The two series of events are

[1] Cp. Durand, *L'Evangile de l'Enfance*, pp. 150 ff.

closely connected by the evangelist, a parallelism already evident in the composition of the narratives, which fall into two principal groups :[1] each group in its turn being composed of three episodes of which the first two are parallel with each other and the third forms a conclusion to the whole.

Thus, we have the announcement of the birth of the Precursor (i, 5–25) and the Annunciation itself (26–38), followed by the visit of our Lord's Mother to the mother of S. John (39–56) ; and again the Precursor's birth (57–80) ; and that of Christ (ii, 1–20), followed by the Circumcision and Presentation of our Lord (ii, 21–40). The two groups are followed by a short account of the Infancy of Christ (ii, 41–52).

The parallelism which is a feature of this literary section —which is a work of art in itself—can be traced in the very details of the narrative :[2] ' the angel Gabriel appeared both to Zacharias, John's father, and to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Zacharias asked for explanations, while Mary's only wish was that the Divine Will should be made clear.' John was born of a woman hitherto barren, and Jesus of a virgin. The circumcision and the naming of the two children are related ; the two names are prophetic, but the graces promised are unequal indeed, John's name meaning ' God will give grace,' while that of Jesus marks Him out as Himself the Saviour of the world. Zacharias predicts that his son will be the Precursor, while in Jesus Simeon and Anne contemplate Salvation and Light. Finally in two brief references (i, 80 ; ii, 40, 52), the growth of the two children is described.

The close union and interconnection of these two sectional narratives betrays the unity of the whole ; so that there is really no room for the theory of Harnack,[3] who distinguishes two groups of narratives, one deriving from the disciples of the Baptist (i, 5–25 ; 46–55 ; 57–80), and the other from Mary, the Mother of Jesus (i, 26–45, 56 ; ii, 5, 16, 19, 33–35, 48, 51). To suppose that Luke had been among S. John's disciples (ibid., 108, n. 3) is a purely gratuitous assumption. These memories of the Precursor's conception, birth, and childhood clearly come from the circle of his relations and not from the group of his followers of later

[1] Plummer, *Saint Luke*, p. 6.
[2] Cp. Lagrange, *Revue biblique*, 1914, pp. 199–202.
[3] *Neue Untersuchungen zur Apostelgeschichte*, Leipzig, 1911, pp. 108 ff.

years ; they have the same character, and probably the same source, as the narratives of the Annunciation and the Birth and Infancy of our Lord.

That the principal source of the narratives contained in these two chapters was the Mother of Jesus herself, is suggested by her own place in them and by the character of the events—more especially the Annunciation—that they record. No doubt the evangelist himself intended to imply this by his brief but reiterated and highly expressive allusions to Mary's own memories and impressions : 'But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart' (ii, 19) ; 'And his father and mother were wondering at those things which were spoken concerning Him' (ii, 33). 'And they understood not the word that He spake unto them' (ii, 50) ; 'And His mother kept all these words in her heart' (ii, 51).[1]

Whether these recollections reached the evangelist orally or in written form is difficult to decide, no great matter in any case.[2] What *is* of capital importance is that we should recognize their inspired nature and true character. The stories and canticles enshrined in them recall, not the already ripe Christianity that S. Luke had before him when he composed his Gospel, but the early tremors of the messianic era ; the first rays of the new dawn.

II. The Angelic messages and the Visitation.

Everything connected with the angel's mission to Zacharias helps to form a link between the future and the past. In making the long-looked-for revelation to the old man, Almighty God selected the most solemn of all possible moments, only occurring once in a priest's life, when he

[1] Cp. Durand, p. 141 ; Lagrange, *Saint Luc*, p. xxxix ; Plummer, p. 7 ; cp. id., *S. Matthieu*, p. 5. Without admitting what we have here stated Harnack none the less writes : '*Aus II*, 19–51 *folgt, dass die Erzaehlungen letzlich als Mitteilungen der Maria betrachtet sein wollen*' (p. 109).

[2] Fr. Lagrange, *Saint Luc*, pp. lxxxvii–lxxxix, regards oral transmission as more probable ; similarly Fr. Médebielle, art. *Annonciation, suppl. au Dict. de la Bible*, p. 268. The contrary solution is preferred by Durand, *L'Enfance de Jésus Christ*, p. 141, following Dalman, *Die Worte Jesu*, p. 31, Plummer, *Saint Luke*, p. 7. Fr. Lagrange, too, accepts the theory of the influence of a Semitic original in certain passages (p. 11, note on I, 7), and in fact this best explains the peculiarities of language and construction to be found in these two chapters. (Cp. Plummer, pp. 7, 45.) The whole question has been discussed afresh by J. G. Machen, *The Virgin Birth*, pp. 102–18, who regards it as more probable that S. Luke made use of a written source, either Semitic or Greek.

was chosen by lot[1] to offer incense in the Temple. Advancing between his two assistants and then remaining alone before the altar, he made the offering, symbolic of the prayer rising from the whole people to God. And God Himself, so long silent, answered at last; it being His Will that the first message of salvation should be made to a priest, in the Temple and at the hour of sacrifice. For this worship in Israel, imperfect as it was, was yet a preparation and a type; and, Almighty God, before superseding it by one more worthy of Himself, willed to recognize it and set His seal upon its sacred character for the last time.

In the angel's promises (i, 12–17) we hear the echo of the ancient books. The life of penance of the Precursor is described in terms that recall the Nazarite (Leviticus x, 9 ff.), and the activities of him who was the new Elias are the same that the prophet Malachias had foretold (iii, 2, 3). All this is Almighty God's answer to the solemn prayer of the Jews. Long had they groaned over their humiliation and perhaps still more over their desolation. God had delivered them to their enemies and seemed to have forsaken them: sadly they repeated the Psalm: 'There is now no prophet': and lo, a prophet is heralded and one whom all will call a second Elias; like the first, a penitent, a miracle-worker, and the Precursor of God Himself.

So would all Israel's hopes be fulfilled, and yet, in this very message of joy, we already detect the hint of opposition and division yet to come. 'Many shall rejoice in his nativity; and he shall convert many to the Lord their God'; but neither the joy nor the conversion will be the lot of all.

To these messianic promises in which all Israel was to rejoice, the angel added special assurances to Zacharias himself. It was he who was to be the father of the new prophet, and for Zacharias pre-eminently would be the joy attending his birth; it was the fulfilment of all the pious hopes long cherished by himself and by Elizabeth his wife. As priest he had prayed for the salvation of Israel; the answer was beyond all expectations, for it brought him the gift of fatherhood as well. He could scarcely believe in the reality of such happiness and, thus doubting, asked for a sign: it was given him through the angel, but it was of such a kind as to be at the same time a punishment for his unbelief.

[1] On the drawing lots by the priests and their temple service, cp. Jeremias, *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu*, ii, pp. 62 ff. and 63, n. 1.

Meanwhile outside the sanctuary the people waited with growing wonder, since Zacharias did not appear ; and when at last he came he failed to give the blessing that he should have uttered in due course. ' And they understood that he had seen a vision in the Temple.'

His week's ministry concluded, Zacharias returned home, and not long after, Elizabeth his wife conceived, and hid herself five months, saying: "Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he hath had regard to take away my reproach among men." She wraps her growing joy in a veil of modesty, which has something of a mystery about it as well.

To this story so touching in its very simplicity, succeeds another, more moving still ; the heralding by the Precursor was but a prelude to that of the Messias Himself (Luke i, 26 ff.). We are no longer in the Temple with the splendour of its worship around us on every side : but in the depths of Galilee, in a township little known and much despised. Nazareth is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament, and to the people of our Lord's time it was a place of evil name. ' Can anything of good come from Nazareth ? ' Nathaniel will say to Philip a little later on (John i, 46). But for us, Christians, it is the true ' garden city,' enshrining the fragrant memory of a Virgin and her Child.

The evangelist himself draws a parallel between the two visitations, and, indeed, their common features are evident enough ; at Gabriel's visit both Mary and Zacharias are surprised and troubled, and then immediately reassured by the Archangel as he speaks of things great in the spiritual order, so soon to come to pass. But, together with these resemblances there are profound differences, too. As soon as he appears the angel salutes Mary with words of homage : ' Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee ; ' but no such salutation is given to Zacharias ; on the contrary it is the angel himself who dominates the scene. ' I am Gabriel, who stand before God.' Again Mary's own attitude differs from that of Zacharias : while he, doubting, asks for a sign : ' Whereby shall I know this ? ' Mary only seeks for information she has a right to ask in a matter so delicate and personal as this : ' How shall this be done, because I know not a man? '[1]

[1] Cp. O. Bardenhewer, *Zur Geschichte der Auslegung der Worte : Wie soll dies geschehen, da ich keinen Mann erkenne ?* In *Compte rendu du IV^e Congrès scientifique international des catholiques à Fribourg* (1897), III, pp. 13–22.

In these words the whole of Catholic tradition has seen the expression of Mary's fixed determination to remain a virgin, and indeed no other interpretation is possible ; for if she meant to consummate the union with Joseph her question would have had no point. The angel reveals the Divine secret and, in addition, gives her a sign, but one that is in no way a punishment like Zacharias' dumbness, but the gracious sign that her cousin Elizabeth, too, is to bear a child. Finally—and it is the essential difference which is the source of all the others—the son of Zacharias will be a great servant of God—the Precursor, in fact ; while the Son of Mary will be the Messias and the Son of God. In almost his first words the angel traces a rule of life for Zacharias' son : he shall ' drink no wine nor strong drink,' and he will walk in the footsteps of Elias with whose spirit and power he shall be clothed. But for Jesus there are no prescriptions of this kind—nothing but the proclamation of His eternal reign. ' God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father, and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever.'[1]

These magnificent promises are a faithful echo of the prophecies of old, and due notice should be taken of the implied continuity between the Old and New Testaments already referred to in the angel's message to Zacharias. In this twofold ' annunciation,' as in the canticles which we shall consider afresh a little later on, the religion of the Messias appears not in the form it was to take after thirty years of the Church's life, but as it was conceived and sung in the dawn of Christianity, in the last years of Herod the King. The Messias, the Son of God, is presented above all else as the son of David, the eternal King of Israel. Soon, beyond this broken foreground, the very apostasy of the chosen people will unveil the boundless horizon of the Church of God. To S. Luke's mental vision no panorama was more familiar than this, and the reserve that he maintains throughout these early narratives, is so much evidence of his fidelity as a sober chronicler of historical fact.

[1] Endless discussions have centred round this passage and especially verses 34, 35. In this immense literature we may especially mention O. Bardenhewer, *Maria Verkuendigung, Ein Kommentar zu Lucas*, I, 126–38. *Biblische Studien*, X, 5, Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1905 ; A. Durand, *L'Enfance de Jésus Christ*, especially pp. 86–96 ; M. J. Lagrange, *La conception surnaturelle du Christ, d'après Saint Luc, Revue biblique*, 1914, pp. 50–71, and his commentary on S. Luke, 188–208 ; A. Médebielle, art. *Annonciation*, especially col. 287–96 ; J. Lebreton, *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, I, 6e edit., pp. 331–5 ; J. G. Machen, *The Virgin Birth* (New York, 1930), pp. 119–68.

Before these sublime promises Mary humbly bows in submission to the Divine Will. She is neither crushed nor elated by the superhuman greatness of her mission. She simply submits : ' Behold the handmaid of the Lord : be it done to me according to Thy word.'

If we consider Mary's immediate future as she saw and accepted it, her simple acquiescence in the Divine Will and the abandonment by which she left herself in His hands will appear in a still more admirable light. What would Joseph think, and what would become of her as a result ? Well, she would leave it all to God and the care of her own honour first of all. So she made no attempt to inform Joseph of the mysterious events that had taken place ; this was God's secret and He would reveal it when and how He willed. As a matter of fact He did so, by an angelic message, but only after leaving Mary and Joseph for several days in their anguish of mind.

And then, beyond that immediate future, what further perspectives opened before the mind of Mary as the *fiat* fell from her lips ? Although we have not her authority for it, we may assert without rashness that Almighty God, who had deigned to love and honour her so much, was not leading her unknowing in the path that ended only with the Cross. And when, a year later, Simeon in prophecy warned her that a sword would transfix her own soul, his words could not fail to recall the most intimate revelations to her mind.

And in all simplicity Mary accepted this stupendous burden of glory and of pain. ' Here,' says Bossuet,[1] ' lies the solid foundation of the great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, that has always existed in the Catholic Church. She took the same part in our Redemption that Eve did in our fall : it is a doctrine received by the whole Church and embodied in a tradition going back to the origin of Christianity itself, and destined to develop continuously from the mysteries of the Gospel itself.'

S. Luke's whole narrative, so touching in its simplicity, is concerned, after all, with only one aspect of the mystery. The message of the angel rings in our ears, and we see our Lady in her purity, her humility, her greatness. But there is something more sublime than all this—the Son of God Himself, through His infinite mercy made flesh. This

[1] *Elévations sur les Mystères ;* 5e Elévation, 12e semaine.

Divine project is unfolded by S. John in the Prologue to his Gospel, i, 1–14.[1]

The opening verses of the Prologue reveal the eternity of the Word, His life in the heart of the Godhead, His Divinity itself. The Johannine doctrine of the Word has in no sense sprung from the requirements of a ritual scruple like the Memra of the Targums, nor is it the expedient of a translator. Rather it is the expression of a living faith in a Person, Human and Divine, whose pre-existence is described, and the story of Whose earthly life is related. The Genesis story was certainly present to the mind of the evangelist; when following the same plan, he passes from the First Beginning of all things (i, 1) to the creation of the world (i, 3). Still this does not seem a sufficient explanation of the personal use of the term The Word, which has no parallel in the Genesis account. Nor does the personification of the word of God as we find it in the prophets and the Psalms furnish any more adequate explanation of the fact. The best way of understanding why, with S. John, the Christian faith in our Lord's Person has taken this particular form, is to have recourse to those Christian documents which preceded and prepared the way for the Fourth Gospel. Thus in 1 Corinthians (i, 24) the Son is called the 'Power' and the 'Wisdom' of God; in 2 Cor. (iv, 4) He appears as the 'image of God'; a doctrine which we find developed in Colossians (i, 15 ff.) which, at the same time, insists on the creative and conserving power of Christ. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we find the fullest expansion of this teaching, and the influence of the Book of Wisdom is manifest. In these different sources, and especially in Hebrews, we find all the essential elements of the Christian doctrine of the Word; nothing is missing but the name. Even this appears in the Apocalypse (xix, 13), where it seems thrown in incidentally in the middle of a vision of triumph in a context in no way philosophical in character, but recalling the Book of Wisdom to our minds.

In the very first verse of S. John's Gospel the term is found again, and once more towards the end of the Prologue (1, 14); but he never uses it further throughout the book. We must not conclude from this that this mention of the Word is merely a passing allusion; he would not have

[1] On S. John's Prologue see Maldonatus, Schanz, Zahn, Lagrange; also Lebreton, *Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, pp. 490–508.

taken such pains to instil into his readers a conception which had no real place in his own mind. But we can understand easily enough that he would use such a term in the Prologue, which is the proper place for an interpretation of the mystery that forms his central theme, while avoiding it in the narrative portion of his work; where terminology of this kind would scarcely be in place. This will be still less surprising if it be allowed that the Prologue was written subsequent to the main body of the work. It must be observed, too, that the whole Gospel is dominated by the conceptions of life and light, which according to the Prologue are the essential attributes of the Word.[1]

The first verses of the Prologue speak of the pre-existence of the Eternal Word. He is in the heart of the Godhead, Himself God; Creator of everything that has been made, Life, Light of men, but a light that the darkness can never comprehend.[2] The true Light enlightening every man. He was in the world—the world that He had made—and yet this same world knew Him not. 'He came unto His own: and His own received Him not.' This realm of His into which the Word came, and was not received, is the Jewish nation. Perhaps that is an allusion to divine apparitions in the Old Testament (cp. John xii, 41; viii, 56) which are thus (as in Matt. xxiii, 37) brought into a line with the supreme manifestation, the Incarnation itself, but there is no doubt that it is chiefly the Incarnation that S. John has in view in this passage, and more expressly still in verse 14: 'And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we saw His glory).' The expression here used ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν was a favourite of S. John's (cp. Apoc. vii, 15; xii, 12; xiii, 6; xxi, 3), recalling, as it does, Jehovah's abiding presence in the tabernacle, in the midst

[1] As used in S. John, the 'Word' differs profoundly from the *logos* of Philo. (Cp. *Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, note J., pp. 636–44.) S. John's term is distinguished from Philo's by its essential attributes: the Divine Filiation, personality, divinity. Further, the influence of Greek philosophy has deeply imbued the *logos* of Philo with characteristics of the Stoic and Platonic *logos*: it is an immanent force binding together and vivifying all things; also the ideal type and model of the world, as well as the image and thought of God. Of these two conceptions the first is entirely foreign to S. John's theology, while of the second there is scarcely more than a trace. On the other hand, the Biblical concept of the word of God, almost absent from Philo, is clearly marked in S. John, both in the Apocalypse and in the Gospel itself.

[2] On this conflict between light and darkness, cp. L. de Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ*, i, pp. 168–70.

of Israel (2 Kings vii, 6) and His promises to come and dwell with His people yet again (Ezech. xxxvii, 27 ; Zacharias ii, 10 ; viii, 3–8 ; Joel iii, 21) ; and most expressly of all, the song of Wisdom (Ecclus. xxiv, 3 ff.). We can also find here an application to the Word of what the Jewish doctors were accustomed to say of the Shekinah : Jesus is God's true presence among man and those who seek Him behold His glory.[1] The whole Prologue leads up to this supreme revelation, and it is this especially that so clearly distinguishes the Word of S. John from the *logos* of Philo. It is in no sense an abstraction, an imaginary personality projected into the metaphysical world : on the contrary, it is a Living Person who has taken Flesh and whom the evangelist himself has seen and touched (cp. 1 John i, 1).

S. John shows us the whole mystery on the very first page of our Lord's life. To-day the Word becomes incarnate, soon He will be born, will grow, teach, die for us. Alas ! many saw Him pass, were struck by His miracles, touched by His words, and yet rejected Him ; still at least some received Him and saw His glory ; and they are the children of God. Like all the rest, and more than they, they have seen with their eyes and touched with their hands the realities of His human life ; but they have seen also what the blindness of others did not see—His glory, the glory of the Only-Begotten Son, full of grace and truth.[2]

After the mystery of our Lady's conception, S. Luke passes on to the Visitation (i, 39 ff.). Elizabeth was hiding her joy and hope in the silence of a veritable retreat, but Mary, told by the angel of the miraculous conception of her relative, left Nazareth, to visit her : ' And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. And she cried out with a loud voice and said : Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.' Thus is the mystery of the Incarnation first revealed to men, nor is it Mary who makes it known. Humbly, she keeps her secret as a precious thing ; it is by the Holy Ghost Himself that it is revealed. And, as we see from Elizabeth's words, it is her own child, John the Precursor, as yet unborn, who

[1] Cp. Dalman, *Die Worte Jesu*, p. 189 ; Burney, *The Poetry of our Lord*, pp. 35, 36.

[2] This manifestation of the glory of the Son of God is one of the essential features of S. John's Gospel ; cp. Cornely, *Introductio in N. T.*, pp. 253 ff. ; *Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, p. 486 and n. 1.

is thrilled by Mary's voice, and then the mother herself, filled by the Holy Ghost, sees the whole mystery unrolled before her eyes. Recognizing her young relative as the mother of the Lord, she humbles herself before her: 'Whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?' she cries; and later on beside the Jordan, John himself will speak to our Lord in the same sense. 'I ought to be baptized by Thee, and cometh Thou to me?' But to-day it is the two mothers who, inspired by their two holy children, give vent to utterances which in years to come will be on these same children's lips. Mary humbles herself as, later, Jesus will; Elizabeth is full of holy confusion, as John will be. At the same time, in deepest admiration, she proclaims the greatness of Mary. 'Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,' words that the Church has made her own, repeating them, in conjunction with the angelic salutation, day by day. In this same Gospel of S. Luke where we find nearly all that we know about the Blessed Virgin, we read (xi, 27, 28) of a woman who, after listening to our Lord, cries out in her admiration: 'Blessed is the womb that bore Thee and the paps that gave Thee suck;' and Jesus answers: 'Yea, rather blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it.' This blessing is already well understood by Elizabeth: she is full of admiration for Mary's greatness, but she is in no delusion as to its true source: 'Blessed art thou that hast believed!'

But much more, even, than Elizabeth, does Mary understand the sublime nature of the gifts she has received, and forthwith she blessed God: 'My soul doth magnify the Lord.' It is not for us here to explain the *Magnificat* in detail nor to meet the objections raised in some quarters against its utterance by Mary in its present form. We can at least linger for a while on this great Canticle of Mary, side by side with those of Zacharias and Simeon with which it has so many features in common. Like the *Benedictus* and the *Nunc dimittis*, the *Magnificat* is full of allusions to other parts of Scripture,[1] which is not surprising when we remember that the Bible was the sole nourishment of pious souls. Saturated with its language and spirit, the words of the sacred text crowded instinctively to their lips, when, in an access of religious emotion, they wished to give thanks to

[1] Cp. Lagrange and Durand, *L'Enfance de Jésus Christ*, pp. 158–65.

God or implore His pardon and aid. We have an example in our Lord Himself when He taught the Our Father to His apostles[1] or when on the Cross He gave vent to His desolation by repeating the first words of Psalm xxi : ' My God . . . why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ' And if we turn to the oldest Christian prayers—that of S. Clement, for example, or S. Polycarp, we shall see how they are at the same time spontaneous and redolent of the language of Holy Writ.[2]

For the rest, each of these Canticles has a spirit of its own. The *Magnificat* is the thanksgiving of the Mother of Christ. Mary said to the angel : ' Behold the handmaid of the Lord,' and here she repeats ' He hath regarded the humility of his handmaid.' Then, widening her vision, she surveys the immense field of Divine action, especially as it was to be seen in the light of the coming of the Messias. The proud are scattered, the mighty put down from their seat, the rich are sent empty away ; while the humble are exalted, and the hungry filled with good things. So the Mother of Christ already proclaims the Gospel of Christ. The first of the Beatitudes (in S. Luke's version) was to be ' Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God,' and again : ' Blessed are ye that hunger now ; for you shall be filled ; ' while corresponding to these blessings are the maledictions : ' Woe to you that are rich : for you have your consolation ; woe to you that are filled, for you shall hunger.' And in the sight of our Blessed Lord His Church will always appear as a small and humble band of poor souls, simple, persecuted, yet infinitely rich in the good things of God. For this blessedness, so characteristic of the New Dispensation, had been heralded by psalmist and prophet, and realized in the life of pious Israelites, and now it is sung by the Mother of God.

After some months spent with Zacharias and Elizabeth, Mary returned to Nazareth, probably before John the Baptist's birth. A cruel trial awaited her there. As we have seen she had kept silence on the subject of the angel's visit and the Divine mystery that followed in its train ; she had left her honour in higher hands, and the fact of her

[1] Cp. J. Hensler, *Das Vaterunser*, Münster, 1914, pp. 72–85 ; F. H. Chase, *The Lord's Prayer in the early Church : Texts and Studies*, I, 3, Cambridge, 1891 ; *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, II, p. 177.

[2] Cp. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, II, pp. 186 ff. and n. 2.

miraculous conception had been revealed to Elizabeth by Almighty God Himself. But Joseph had received no such communication, and Mary returned to him, having been pregnant for three months. S. Matthew relates the anguish through which he had to pass : ' Joseph her husband, being a just man and not willing to expose her publicly, was minded to put her away privately ' (i, 19). Among the Jews, betrothal, like marriage, was a sacred contract, but, also like marriage, could be terminated by divorce, and it was to this measure that Joseph felt himself reduced, although he was at least determined to carry it out in secret. It was at this juncture that Almighty God intervened to remove his anxiety and save the honour of the Mother of His Son. '. . . the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying : Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son ; and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins ' (Matt. i, 20, 21).

The announcement thus made to Joseph resembles that already made by Gabriel to Mary. It reveals the divine origin of our Lord's conception and the sublime part He was to play, especially, in this case, that of Redeemer of the world. Zacharias said in his canticle : He shall deliver Israel from his enemies. But the angel proclaims a deliverance of a still more intimate kind : ' He shall save His people from their sins.' The title ' Son of David ' given to Joseph is to be observed as having, under the circumstances, a quite special importance of its own, namely, that as foster-father of Jesus, Joseph would legally transmit to Him the rights which by virtue of that title He himself would claim.

This is the first time we have borrowed from S. Matthew's narrative, and we can see at once what the main characteristics of his Gospel are. In S. Luke it is always Mary who appears in the foreground, but in S. Matthew it is Joseph who takes that place. It was to him that the angel announced the miraculous conception of our Lord and to him that the angel appeared, after the visit of the Magi, to instruct him to flee into Egypt and later to tell him to return to Palestine.

It has been reasonably supposed that S. Matthew drew his information from Galilee where personal memories of

S. Joseph would be more faithfully preserved ; 'One may conjecture that James, the brother of the Lord, was one of those who transmitted these recollections to the Evangelist.'[1] What is more certain is that these two chapters of S. Matthew show a solid and detailed knowledge of Palestinian Judaism as it existed under the Herods, and assume a similar knowledge in the reader as well.[2] The legal situation created by betrothal, the derivation of the name Jesus, the topography of Bethlehem and the proximity of Rachel's tomb, the genealogy of the Herods and the restriction of Archelaus' authority to Judea—all these details, rapidly called to mind, suppose readers to whom the Judaism of this period was familiar and a writer who moves easily and securely in this past, so soon altogether to disappear. Such readers would understand without difficulty the application to the Messias of Micheas i, 15, with its primary reference to the people of Israel ; or again, known themselves as Nazarenes, they would catch the drift of S. Matthew's passing allusion (ii, 23) to this name and the meaning that it bore.

Thus the two Gospels that record our Lord's infancy appear from the purely historical standpoint to be derived from most authentic sources ; S. Luke inspired by our Lady's own recollections, and S. Matthew based on a tradition originating with S. Joseph himself. These two traditions, authoritative in the highest degree, are none the less independent and fragmentary : the order of events may be sometimes uncertain and, above all, the narrative as a whole remains incomplete. But at least these fragments have a historical value of the first order and at the same time a freshness and liveliness of expression that make them one of the most precious religious treasures that we possess.[3]

So far as the facts already related are concerned, it is Luke alone who supplies their setting in Nazareth and Galilee ; to which scenes S. Matthew does not conduct us

[1] Plummer, *S. Matt.*, p. 5.

[2] Cp. Durand, *L'Enfance de Jésus Christ*, p. 176.

[3] In an article in *Biblische Zeitschrift*, XIII (1915), pp. 334–7, M. V. Hartl has attempted to show that S. Luke's narrative presupposes that of S. Matthew, filling in details on the subject of Nazareth and intentionally supplementing it, for example, by the events of our Lord's childhood (ii, 40–52). In a contrary sense, Lagrange (*S. Luc*, pp. 91, 92) considers that S. Luke 'was unacquainted with the beginning of Matthew's Gospel,' and this seems the more probable opinion. Cp. J. G. Machen, *The Virgin Birth*, pp. 188 ff.

until after the return from Egypt (ii, 23) ; but Luke also tells us that Joseph belonged to Bethlehem as being one of the ' house and family of David ' (ii, 4).[1]

III. The Nativity.

To Bethlehem, therefore, were Mary and Joseph obliged to go to be enrolled in compliance with Augustus' edict, promulgated by Cyrinus (cp. *supra*, pp. xxii, xxiii). They would have set out by the same road, about ninety miles long, which the pilgrims of to-day take about three or four days to traverse. Descending the hill of Nazareth they would have first crossed the plain of Esdraelon, all the great memories of Israel's past being aroused one after another by the humble villages through which they passed or which lay along their route. Sulam, hallowed by Eliseus' miracles, with the *Canticle of Canticles* still echoing through its streets ; Jezreel, foul with Jezebel's crimes and blood ; the mountains of Gelboe, mute witnesses of Saul and Jonathan's defeat and death ; and then Samaria with Hebal and Gerizim, once sacred mountains, now strongholds of Samaritan schism and hate ; with Jacob's well and Joseph's tomb close to the road, as we enter the deep and narrow valley. Then, step by step, we rise from the plain of Samaria toward the mountains of Judea. Here, to the left, are Silo and then Bethel, formerly holy places of Israel, but long abandoned and rejected by God. And then at last from the heights of Scopus we see before us Jerusalem and Herod's temple, still unfinished, but already all glittering with marble and gold. There Almighty God still dwelt ; but alas ! for how long ?

To-day, no less than in the past, no pilgrims can pass unmoved across this sacred ground where God showed Himself so bountiful and man so ungrateful. But such sentiments are nothing beside the profound emotion that filled the heart of Joseph, still more of that of Mary. In these

[1] We may here recall the fact that the Jewish colony in Galilee was of comparatively recent date. We read in 1 Mach. v, 14 ff., that the Jewish inhabitants of Galilee sent to Judas to ask for help against the threat of invasion from their pagan neighbours ; that Simon hurried to their assistance with three thousand men and conquered the pagans, but no doubt finding the position indefensible took back the Jews with their wives and families into Judea. It was not until the reign of Aristobulus (104–103 B.C.) that the people of Galilee were forced to live as Jews (Josephus, A.J., XIII, xi, 3 ; Schürer, II, p. 11 ; I, p. 276). At the time of our Lord's birth, a hundred years later. it is evident that the Jews who had settled in Galilee were still attached to the country of their origin.

valleys and mountains the whole history of their own people lived again with its faults, prayers and hopes ; and the Child that Mary bore within her had come to wash away the sins and fulfil the desires of that heroic past.

At last they left Jerusalem behind, and after two hours on foot reached the city of David and were at home. But there is no welcome for them there. Doubtless the enrolment had brought a great concourse of strangers to Bethlehem and the humble travellers from Galilee came too late and were too poor to find a place : 'there was no room for them in the inn.' However, they must find some sort of resting-place and as soon as possible, and having been told of a stable in a grotto[1] it was there that Mary's days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger. Mary was not, like other mothers, exhausted by the birth of her child, and could face the first cares of motherhood alone. This astonishing miracle 'took place in silence,' (Ignatius, *Ephes.* xix, 1) and the evangelist shows his veneration for the mystery by the reverent discretion with which he writes.[2]

[1] Our Lord's birth at Bethlehem in a grotto is mentioned as early as S. Justin, *Dial.*, lxxviii, 5 : 'Since Joseph had no lodging in the village he established himself in a grotto close to Bethlehem, and it was while they were there that Mary gave birth to Christ and laid Him in a manger; where He was found by the wise men from Arabia when they arrived.' In the following century Origen writes : 'With reference to Jesus' birth at Bethlehem if, after Micheas' prophecy, and the story related in the Gospels by the disciples of Jesus, anyone desires further proofs, let him know that, in accordance with what is related in the Gospels about His birth, there is shown at Bethlehem the grotto in which He was born and in this grotto the cradle where He lay swathed, and what is there shown is well known in these parts, even by those who are strangers to our faith, namely that Jesus, who is adored and admired by Christians, was born in this grotto.' (C. Celsus, I, 51.) These passages are cited with several others by Vincent, *Bethléem*, pp. 2 ff., who adds the following remarks (p. 6) : 'Far from being incompatible with the circumstances of our Lord's Nativity, as recorded by S. Luke, the existence of the grotto is rather required by them, and fits in marvellously with the whole narrative. Further, we are beholden to the tradition of the first and second centuries for having preserved for us a body of supplementary information by no means negligible.' And a little later on he concludes (p. 10) : 'Moreover, it is generally agreed that the grotto spoken of in the Christian literature of the second century is identical with the "Crypt of the nativity" that we are shown to-day, and that it was already associated at the beginning of that century with the traditions of our Saviour's birth.' Fr. Vincent goes on to show that all attempts to explain this Christian tradition as the survival of a pagan myth have been in vain.

[2] From the end of the second century the naïve piety of story-tellers was to embroider this sacred mystery with fancies. For example, in the

It is not for us to add anything to these simple words of S. Luke which breathe the spirit of heavenly peace and are not unworthy of so high a mystery. We can only repeat the words of Mary herself: 'He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble.' And indeed it was the humble who were privileged to receive the first news of Christ's birth—shepherds who spent the night in the fields watching their flocks. An old tradition places the field of the shepherds in the fertile valley known as the field of Booz. It was there, we are told, that Booz slept of old and that on waking he sought Ruth, the gleaner, at his feet. And from the union of Booz and Ruth was born Obed, the grandfather of David, the ancestor of the babe who had just been born that night in Bethlehem. The ancient idyll begun long ago in the silence of the night had its fulfilment in this other night of our Saviour's birth.

> 'And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: For this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will.' (Luke ii, 9–14.)

Years later, at the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus was to point to the fact that the poor had the Gospel preached to them as a sign that His mission was from above (Matt. xi, 5). To-day, at the very hour of His birth, it is to the poor that the evangelical message is sent. The life lived by these shepherds was that pastoral life that had been lived of old by their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the patriarchs; the life in which David had grown up

Protoevangelium of Saint James the midwife Salome parodies with unsophisticated immodesty some of S. Thomas' words (John xx, 25). Ἐὰν μὴ βάλω τὸν δάκτυλον μου καὶ ἐρευνήσω τὴν φύσιν αὐτῆς, οὐ μὴ πιστεύσω ὅτι παρθένος ἐγέννησεν. This is shocking, but it must not be interpreted as evidence of Docetism (cp. Amann, *Le Protévangile de Jacques*, Paris 1910, pp. 31 ff.) either in this apocryphal work or in others like it (cp. Lagrange, *Revue biblique*, 1928, p. 551).

while he watched his father's flocks protecting them against the lion and the bear. But in our Lord's time it was despised and held in suspicion by the Scribes[1] who doubted if those living it would be able to carry out the thousand and one ritual prescriptions of the law. It was to them that the birth of Jesus was first announced and to them that He loved to compare Himself later on. 'I am the Good Shepherd' (John x, 11). And from this first night the angel's message is indeed magnificent in form: the Saviour, Christ the Lord; these are titles which will often resound through the Epistles, but which we encounter rarely enough on the Gospel page.[2] And to this glorious proclamation of the Messias' reign the heavenly choir echo: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.'[3]

And to Bethlehem the shepherds came, the first pilgrims, to be followed by so many millions more.[4]

The prescribed eight days having passed, the Child was circumcised and given the name of Jesus. S. John the Baptist's circumcision had been a great family feast distinguished by striking miracles; relations and friends had been present in large numbers, and had afterwards bruited abroad the wonders they had seen.

About our Lord's circumcision S. Luke records nothing parallel to this. At Bethlehem Joseph and Mary were only passing 'guests,' and naturally they did not experience the rush of relations and friends that surrounded the priest, Zacharias. This holy mystery of our Saviour's circumcision no doubt passed unnoticed, as did all His infancy apart from the few events reserved by God to be revealed to witnesses chosen by Himself.

One such revelation was to take place a month later on, when Mary presented herself in the Temple to purify herself and offer her son to God. According to the law (Lev. xii) a woman who had borne a male child was impure for seven days. This period passed, she had to remain at home for thirty-three days, and then forty days after the child's

[1] Cp. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, I, p. 87.

[2] *Origines du dogme de la Trinité*, p. 363.

[3] On the precise sense of these last words cp. Lagrange and Van Kasteren, *Revue biblique*, 1894, pp. 58–61.

[4] In the second century the Emperor Hadrian tried to abolish Bethlehem, this place of pilgrimage, by destroying the sacred crib: S. Jerome, epist. lviii, 3 (P.L., XXI, 581); cp. *supra*, p. 17, n. 1. This only served to mark the site of the Holy Place.

birth she presented herself in the Temple for her purification. If she was rich she brought an offering of a lamb and a pigeon ; if poor then two small pigeons ; the priests prayed over her and her purification was accomplished. By another prescription of the law (Exodus xiii, 2, 12 ff.) every first-born child was to be consecrated to the Lord. This law —part of the Mosaic legislation—did not require that the child should be brought to Jerusalem, and be presented in the Temple ; none the less Mary made a point of doing so, and S. Luke is at pains to record the fact. From His earliest infancy, by an example of obedience, Christ would consecrate the law that He came, not to abolish, but to fulfil ; and on this occasion He was going to be hailed as the Messias within the Temple itself, not by the crowd, as He would be later, but by certain favoured witnesses chosen by God Himself.

The first was an old man who had long looked for the consolation of Israel. Almighty God had promised him that he should not die before he had seen Christ the Lord. Guided by the Holy Ghost, he came to the Temple, took the Child Jesus in his arms, and the *Nunc dimittis* rose in serene triumph from his lips (Luke ii, 29–32).

This Canticle is short enough but it is moving in the extreme. The aged servant of God, who for years had fixed his gaze on that consolation of Israel that he had awaited so long is at last relieved of his long vigil ; the light so long hoped for has shone at last, and God's servant can depart in peace, his task accomplished, his hopes fulfilled. The darkness brooding over the nation will melt away, and Israel's glory be known throughout the earth. Thirty years later Jesus will say to hearers all too unconscious of their good fortune : ' Many have desired to see the things that you see and have not seen them ' (Luke x, 24). Truths that the disciples were to prove so slow to understand, Simeon grasped at once and in a moment of time ; thus quickly do souls ripen whom God has prepared, and whom He wishes to gather for Himself.

These wide perspectives of glory and light were truly prophetic, but how many years, aye, and centuries were to pass before the nations would all be brought within the circle of God's light ! Such joy and triumphant assurance are more in keeping with the dawn of Christianity than with

the period when the Gospel was written and when Israel's glory seemed so far away. This fact, with many others, confirms the antiquity of these hymns, piously preserved and transcribed by S. Luke.

Our Lady and S. Joseph worshipped and meditated in silence (ii, 33) ; an attitude which S. Luke had already noted in Mary after the shepherds had come to visit and worship (ii, 19). Doubtless neither Mary nor Joseph had anything to learn about Jesus from the shepherds or from Simeon. But in these miracles of grace, still more than in those of nature, to know more is to admire more, light already received illuminating further knowledge and opening up further prospects without end.

It will be also noticed that S. Luke, although so careful to put our Lady's virginity in the strongest light, speaks here of our Lord's father and mother just as he speaks of his parents a few verses further back (27). These are the usual modes of speech and must be here understood in the light of facts clearly affirmed elsewhere. For the rest, it is Mary who is in the foreground throughout the whole of this scene ; to her alone Simeon foretells the cruel torments that shall pierce her soul (35). For after the old man's hymn of joy there followed prophecies of a darker hue. Isaias of old had sung : ' . . . He shall be a sanctification to you : but for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to the two houses of Israel, for a snare and a ruin to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And very many of them shall stumble and fall, and shall be broken in pieces, and shall be snared and taken ' (viii, 14). In the last days of His ministry our Lord Himself was to return to the picture thus drawn by the prophet (Matt. xxi, 42), and all the Apostles, S. Peter (1 Pet. ii, 8), S. Paul (Rom. ix, 33), and S. John (iii, 19) make a point of the painful contrast : Christ came to His own and this stupendous grace has been salvation to the faithful, but condemnation to others—so violent an antithesis this, that Mary's heart is transfixed as with a sword.

Side by side with Simeon we have the figure of Anna, an old woman of eighty-four. When quite young and only seven years married, she had lost her husband, since when she had never left the Temple, serving God night and day in fasting and prayer ; and coming in at this precise moment, she began to praise God and to speak to all who awaited

the redemption of Jerusalem on the subject of the Holy Child (ii, 36–38).

In these two noble figures, Simeon and Anna, is personified the whole of ancient Judaism when faithful to its ideals. They fast and pray and wait for the manifestation of God. Such Judaism no doubt passed almost unnoticed by the rest of contemporary Israel ; while present-day historians still scarcely do more than distinguish between the two rival groups of Pharisees and Sadducees, as practically dividing between them the Jewish world of the time of Christ. But behind these factions there were still faithful souls who prayed and hoped, looking, above all, for the triumph of holiness and justice in the world. It was for them that Christ came, and to them that He revealed Himself from His earliest days.

The adoration of the Magi and the flight into Egypt have left no trace in the Gospel of S. Luke, and were probably not even known to him. Monsignor Le Camus puts the adoration of the Magi before the Presentation in the Temple, but this chronology is very difficult to accept. It is not easy to understand how Mary and Joseph could have taken the infant Christ from Bethlehem to Jerusalem after the visit of the Magi, and how neither this journey in itself nor especially the homage and prophecies of Simeon and the infectious admiration of Anna could have failed to arouse Herod's suspicions. Nor does this hypothesis square with S. Matthew's narrative. Warned by the angel, the Magi did not return by Jerusalem as they had promised, and the enraged tyrant massacred the children of Bethlehem, Jesus only escaping by flight. This succession of facts is so rapid that it leaves no room for a visit to Jerusalem, such as the hypothesis mentioned implies.

After the Presentation the Holy Family returned to Bethlehem, no doubt intending to settle there ; for we are told by S. Matthew that even after the sojourn in Egypt S. Joseph's first thought was to retire to Bethlehem, and it was only the fear of Archelaus that turned him from this resolve (ii, 21, 22). The visit of the Magi and the resulting massacre by Herod caused his flight almost immediately after the return from Jerusalem, and it is not surprising that this brief stay has left no trace in the tradition that comes to us from S. Luke.

As regards the Magi themselves the Gospels give us very

little information as to their rank and number and the country from which they came.

> ' When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of king Herod, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying : Where is He that is born King of the Jews ? For we have seen His star in the East, and are come to adore Him.' (Matt. ii, 1–2.)

The presents that they brought seem to have come from Arabia, a point that S. Justin Martyr dwells upon more than once.[1]

The question of the country of the Magi is a secondary matter. What interests the evangelist is the religious lesson that the story has to teach. Here we have strangers from afar, obedient to the light given them by Almighty God, coming not without difficulty and danger to adore the infant Christ, while in Jerusalem no one follows their example. The Scribes know where the Messias is to be born, and Herod, informed by them, in his turn enlightens the Wise Men ; but neither Scribes nor king avail themselves of the hints these travellers give. Jerusalem is disturbed, and Herod has no thought but to bring about the death of this King of the Jews.

Thus early is anticipated the Divine judgement that is to bring to nought all the prejudices of the Jews.

> ' And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven : But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' (Matt. viii, 11–12.)

We need not be surprised at Herod's fright or the cruel measure which it called forth, since his nearest relations

[1] *Dial.*, lxxvii, 4 ; lxxviii, lxxxviii, cii, ciii, cvi. Cp. Lagrange, *S. Matt.*, p. 20. We find the same tradition in Tertullian (*Marc.*, iii, 13), and in S. Epiphanius (*de fide* viii). Another tradition represents them as Persian priests : ' This is the iconographical tradition of Rome from S. Priscilla's painting of the second century (where they are represented with Phrygian head-gear) down to those of the third and fourth century in which the costume is more developed . . . it is also the almost unanimous tradition of the Fathers . . . but this hardly fits in with the language of S. Matthew who makes them come from the East. Now, in the Bible, as also in the current practice in Jerusalem, by the Orient or the East is always meant the country beyond Jordan and the Dead Sea ' (Lagrange, loc. cit.).

had been the victims of his suspicious cruelty ; Aristobulus his brother-in-law, his father-in-law Hyrcanus, his mother-in-law Alexandra, his wife Mariamne and his two sons by her, Alexander and Aristobulus. The life of the new-born of Bethlehem meant no more to him than that of these ; he decreed their death, but his plans were brought to nought. He dismissed the Magi on their errand with all speed and at dead of night in order to hide their departure from the inhabitants of Jerusalem ; but the star appears once more in the sky, and full of joy at seeing its familiar light, under its guidance they reached the resting-place of the Holy Child, and entering found Jesus, with Mary His Mother ; and having prostrated and adored they opened their treasures and offered gold, frankincense and myrrh. And Christ who had accepted the humble homage of the shepherds now received the rich presents of the Magi ; but gold, frankincense and myrrh such as were laid at His cradle would no more be offered to Him during the whole course of His life, until the very end. Then He would receive afresh the offerings of the rich ; the alabaster box and the rich perfumes ; and after His death the hundred pounds of aloes brought by Nicodemus to embalm His body.

Thus did God wish to honour the great humiliation of His cradle and His tomb.

All these events at Bethlehem were no more than a passing flash of glory. The Magi depart, and, warned in sleep not to revisit Herod, they return home by another route. Whereupon Herod massacres the baby boys of Bethlehem, but without being able to reach the Child Jesus whose parents had carried Him into Egypt at the angel's command.

This exile did not last long, for only a few months after the massacre of Bethlehem Herod was dead. His appalling death agony has been described in detail by Josephus ;[1] the foul infection entering little by little into the tyrant's body and filling the palace with an intolerable stench. Five days before his own death, he had his eldest son executed, and at last died himself amidst the curses of the entire population.

According to his last will and testament Judea should have passed to his son Archelaus, together with the title of king. It was a burdensome inheritance. The people, exasperated by the violence of the preceding reign and especially by the execution of the two rabbis, Judas and

[1] A.J., XVII, 6, 5, 168–172.

Matthias, clamoured for the punishment of Herod's counsellors, by way of revenge, and when Archelaus, having failed to placate them by fair words, called out the military, some of the soldiers were stoned and the others put to flight. It needed the whole of Archelaus' army to crush the rebellion, and in the Temple itself he massacred more than three thousand Jews, after which act of bloody repression he set out for Rome, to secure his recognition from Augustus. Thither also went his brother Antipas to dispute his claim, while the Jews sent a deputation to implore the emperor to deliver them from the Herods and to take the government of the country into his own hands.

This request of the Jews was refused for the moment and the principal arrangements of Herod's will were confirmed: Archelaus receiving Judea, Samaria, and Idumea; Antipas, Galilee and Perea; and Philip Auranitis and Trachonitis. However, Archelaus did not receive the title of king and had to content himself with that of ethnarch, his two brothers becoming tetrarchs in their turn.

Before this adjudication was completed the Holy Family had already left Egypt, Joseph having received a warning from heaven immediately after Herod's death (ii, 19) which he obeyed without delay. On leaving Egypt he was still without information as to who had succeeded Herod, and did not learn the facts until he arrived in Palestine. There he found Archelaus reigning as king in Judea (ii, 22), and not merely, it seems, as ethnarch, which was the title with which he returned from Rome, a fresh indication which confirms the other evidence, and fixes the return from Egypt in the first months of the reign of Archelaus.

So the Holy Family settled at Nazareth, and it was there that Jesus was to grow up. His birth at Bethlehem and the short stay in Egypt were memories preserved only in the minds of His parents. For everyone else, Jesus was a Nazarene.

IV. The Infancy.

These years of childhood, upon which the Apocryphal Gospels dilate with endless detail, are described in a single sentence by S. Luke: '. . . the Child grew and waxed strong, full of wisdom: and the grace of God was in Him' (ii, 40), a presage of that law of the kingdom of God which our Lord was to reveal later on: '. . . so is the kingdom of

God, as if a man should cast seed into the earth, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed spring and grow up whilst he knows it not ' (Mark iv, 26, 27). So the heavenly seed has fallen into the earth and now grows in the sight of Almighty God ; but men reck nothing of it. Immersed in their affairs, they slept and woke again and, all unknown to them, the seed of Redemption grew and ripened. Herod was dead, Archelaus soon lost his throne ; Herod Antipas followed his life of debauchery ; Philip founded new cities ; the Romans subjugated and administered the country. And amidst all this restless activity—often foolish and nearly always in vain—the Son of God grew and raised no question in any mind. No one in the circle in which the Holy Family lived suspected the existence of any mystery. The early years went by and then childhood, boyhood, youth, without anyone noticing anything superhuman about Him. His parents kept their secret to themselves, worshipping and admiring, while they held their peace.

However, in one incident the Divine Secret was half revealed. When Jesus was twelve years old, having been taken by His parents to the Temple for the Passover, He let Mary and Joseph set out in return and remained in the Temple unnoticed by them. When evening drew on, they noticed His absence, and thought at first that He was in some group of relations or friends. But having searched for Him in vain there was nothing for it but to return to Jerusalem the next day, which they did in mortal anguish of mind. After another long search, ' after three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions.'

Humble, as a pupil, He mingled with the other children sitting on the ground at the doctors' feet ; but soon all were in admiration at the keen intelligence that shone through every reply that He made. When this sight met their eyes His parents were amazed, while His Mother could not restrain herself from saying : ' Son, why hast Thou done so to us ? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said to them : How is it that you sought Me ? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business ? And they understood not the word that He spoke unto them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth ; and was subject to them. And His Mother kept all these words in her heart ' (Luke ii, 48–51).

The last feature of this story is one that we have already met with a little earlier in S. Luke (ii, 19). Once again, then, the evangelist reveals the source from which he has drawn Mary's recollections, piously preserved in her heart. Our Lady, in her humility, has been careful not to conceal the fact that at first she did not understand her Son's words ; no doubt she was aware of His Divine Sonship ; but this did not mean that she could grasp all at once the form under which it would function here below. Up to this time He had lived with her in humility and obedience ; to-day, for the first time, He devoted Himself to higher duties, and He did it in entire independence, leaving her in ignorance and anguish of mind.

But if it be true that only progressively could Mary understand the earthly mission of her Son and the duties it implied, there are no traces of anything corresponding to this in Jesus Himself, nothing in the nature of ignorance, hesitation, a sudden illumination of mind. From the beginning He showed Himself fully conscious of who He was and of the line of action He must take. Simply and with perfect authority He asserts His independence in what is really a kind of prelude to His life's work later on ; and then He returns without effort to the humble portion He has chosen for Himself, returning to Nazareth and taking up once more His boy's life with all the lowliness and subjection that it implied.

The story of our Lord's life during these thirty years is summed up by S. Luke in these few words : ' And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and men ' (ii, 52). Nor must it be thought that this intellectual and moral growth of Christ was in appearance alone. On this subject S. Cyril of Alexandria writes :[1] ' The evangelist in his wisdom, having introduced the Divine Word made flesh, shows how, being united by the dispensation of the Incarnation to the flesh He had taken to Himself, He allowed it to develop on the lines that its own nature would dictate. Now it is proper to human nature to advance in age and wisdom, nay, I would say even in grace, each individual's intelligence developing in some sense at the same time as the dimensions of his body. With children this is no longer what it was in infancy, and in later years it develops still more. For it was certainly not impossible or lacking in

[1] *Quod unus sit Christus*, P. G., LXXV, 1332.

feasibility for the Word, since He is God and born of the Father, to make the body to which He was united grow even in the cradle itself, and to bring it suddenly to perfect maturity. And I will add that it would have been simple and easy for Him as an infant to display the most admirable wisdom : but that would have differed but little from magic and would have violated the economy of the Incarnation. For it was ordained that this mystery should take place without external display. Consequently, the laws of Christ's human nature were permitted to retain all their force. And this is to be attributed to the likeness of that human nature to our own : we develop, little by little, time giving growth to our stature, and in the same proportion to our intelligence.'[1]

The fact that this growth is a reality tempts us to try to trace it throughout the story of our Lord's life, but information is almost completely lacking for a study of this kind. 'And, perhaps,' observes Lagrange,[2] 'it is this lacuna more than anything else that makes it difficult to write a life of Christ.' To some extent we can make up for this lack of data by throwing on our Lord's youth the more abundant light that His public ministry enjoys.

We see Him in the light of His teaching, reflecting Holy Scripture at every turn, especially Deuteronomy, Isaias, Daniel, and the Psalms.[3] The doctrine of God's Fatherly Providence, so lovingly described in the Sermon on the Mount, recalled to the minds of our Lord's hearers familiar verses of the Psalms, at the same time making their meaning clearer and revealing their unsuspected depths. In the same way His teaching, no less than His own personality, suggested above all Isaias' prophecies of the suffering servant of Jehovah, in his rôle of Redeemer, His patient goodness, His attributes of mercy and compassion ; while towards the end of His life, and especially when He stood before the High Priest, with the utmost solemnity He would call up the visions of Daniel to His hearers' minds. And whenever we thus quote the words of Holy Writ we notice the total absence of those juristic subtleties so freely indulged in by the teachers of His time, as also of the legends that fill the

[1] This human growth has been explained with greater precision by S. Thomas, who, besides the beatific vision and infused knowledge, distinguishes a third, experimental knowledge which is obtained by a real process of acquisition. IIIa, Q. xii, art. 1, ad 2. Cp. *Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, pp. 560–99. [2] *L'Evangile de Jésus Christ*, p. 49.

[3] Cp. Headlam, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ*, pp. 127 ff.

Midrash ; all is simple, profound, direct. Our Lord draws from Holy Scripture like a rich man from his own treasure, knowing its resources, which He Himself has created, and disposing of them with sovereign right.

And then there is another book, lowlier and more obscure than the Bible, but also ' with God for its author,' and upon which the Son of God looked with serene delight. ' Francis of Assisi,' writes L. de Grandmaison,[1] ' was no greater friend of nature, as the Gospels bear witness on every page. All Galilee is reflected there with its mournings and feastings, its sky and changing seasons ; its flocks and vineyards ; its harvests and the fleeting glory of its anemones ; its beautiful lake, and its sturdy population of fishermen and well-to-do cultivators of the soil.' ' I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these ; ' words instinct with emotion, spoken in passing in the Sermon on the Mount ; but sounding like an echo of those of the Creator as He surveyed His finished work. ' And God saw all the things that He had made and they were very good ; ' but an echo more moving and human since it passes through the human heart of Christ. This admiration for the works of Creation would become one of the main characteristics of the Christian contemplatives of later times. As early as S. Clement of Rome, the first Apostolic Father, we find this sense of the world's beauty relieving the sober gravity of his Epistle (chaps. xx and xxxiii). And it is the same with all the greatest of the Saints ; the strain of mortification might, for a while, veil their eyes, but when the light of contemplation once more flooded their souls it made them spell-bound at the beauty of God's works. In earth and sky children see nothing but the theatre of their games ; and most adults, again, nothing but line, colour, and mass ; but the Saints, like the Son of God, contemplate these things as part of the glory of God.

In this little world of our Lord's hidden life we must distinguish the circle of the Holy Family and the wider sphere of the town itself. And in this home circle the first place is taken by the Mother of Christ. ' If,' writes Lagrange,[2] ' it were allowable to carry the analysis of His human development to such a point, we should find that there is something in Him, as in others, that can be traced

[1] *Jésus Christ*, II, p. 111.
[2] *L'Evangile de Jésus Christ*, p. 50.

to the influence of her who gave Him birth. His grace of manner, His exquisite, forbearing delicacy, His gentleness, are all from her. But that is characteristic of all those who often feel their heart softened by maternal tenderness and their spirit refined by conversation with the woman, reverenced and tenderly loved, whose joy it was to initiate them into the many and varied stages of life. Truly Jesus was, as His fellow townsmen called Him, 'the Son of Mary' (Mark vi, 3).

And if He has received so much from her it is because He has loved her with an infinite love: as God, He chose her and gave her her unique prerogatives of virginity and immaculate purity together with the grace of her Divine maternity; as man, so faithfully did He cherish her that on the Cross, in the midst of His frightful tortures His last care was for her: 'Woman, behold thy son: behold thy Mother.'

And this double love led Him to choose for His mother the part most worthy of her. The prophet had spoken of Him as the servant of Jehovah; His mother was the handmaiden of the Lord in her devotion and detachment, and her perfect forgetfulness of self: 'It is a more blessed thing to give rather than to receive.' Christ has chosen this part for Himself; and for His mother also. And so well has Mary understood the value of the gift, that in her memories of His childhood she has dwelt with particular attention on those features that to a superficial reader might seem severe: 'How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?' (Luke ii, 49). And later, at Cana: 'Woman, what is that to you and to Me?' (John ii, 4). And again at Capharnaum: 'Who is My mother and My brethren?' (Mark iii, 33). And in reply to the woman who cried: 'Blessed is the womb that bore Thee and the paps that gave Thee suck;' 'Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it' (Luke xi, 28). These words of Christ spring from the ideal that He wished to set before His disciples, namely, that the care of the kingdom of God must prevail over all family affections, if necessary tearing the disciple from his parent's side: 'I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother . . . and he that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me' (Matt. x, 35–37). He seeks to give them an example

of the same detachment from family affections which He demands of them.

This lesson was peculiarly necessary in the world in which Jesus lived. In Palestine the relations of the family and the clan were close to a degree, and a man involved all his relations in his own fate.[1] Instinctively, then, the members of our Lord's circle would apply this law to His own kinsmen and, in fact, they were not slow to claim the benefit of it. It is in this sense that we must understand the request of the sons of Zebedee and their mother (Mark x, 35–45), if it be admitted that Salome was the sister of our Lord's mother. Later, at Jerusalem, we shall see the same spirit at work; when the bishop of that city will be James, the Lord's brother, and later Simeon, His kinsman. To be sure, these two personages were Saints, but it is none the less certain that the importance given to the privilege of natural relationship was not a source of strength to the Church in Jerusalem. On the other hand, S. Paul protested that he had no desire to have known Christ according to the flesh (2 Cor. v, 16).

Against the ever formidable claims of these ties of flesh and blood, Jesus Christ put His disciples on their guard by word and example alike; and no doubt it was for that reason that He tolerated the incredulity of His relations and kinsmen for so long. Only six months before the Passion, just before the Feast of Tabernacles, the brethren of Jesus still had not faith in Him (John vii, 5), and the spirit of unbelief revealed in this fact throws an austere shadow over the whole childhood and youth of Christ; for it was among these people that He grew up. No doubt the Lord's 'brethren' were honest artisans and, later, Divine Grace would make them into faithful Christians (Acts i, 14), but at the period in question they were still Jews, seeing without believing, and hearing without understanding what they heard. To them the Heavenly Father had not yet revealed His Son. All this warns us not to think of Nazareth as a sort of earthly paradise. Mary and Joseph were entrusted with the secret of God, but in this they were alone, and even for them the secret had its obscurities that the light from heaven had not yet dispersed (Luke ii, 50). In silence

[1] As example we may quote the Machabees, Herod, the family of Annas the High Priest, or, conversely, the story of the insolvent debtor (Matt. xviii, 25).

they waited, reflected, and admired ; and meanwhile Jesus grew up, and none of those among whom He lived, not even his relations, except Joseph and Mary, suspected the mystery of His Divine nature or His miraculous conception, or His messianic rôle. The heavenly seed had been cast into the earth, and had sprung up, the blade was ripe, and men knew it not.

V. Our Lord's Relations.

In this complex question several points have to be considered, but not all are equally important or equally certain.

(*a*) Mary, the Mother of Jesus, remained always a virgin, and those who are called ' The Lord's brethren ' were not Mary's children. This is a dogma of faith for every Catholic and is also the conclusion to which Scripture, illuminated by tradition, inevitably leads.

This belief rests on the Annunciation narrative and especially on our Lady's reply : ' How shall this be done, because I know not a man ? ' The question thus put implies Mary's intention of remaining always a virgin, at whatever cost, preferring virginity even to the honour that the angel placed within her grasp.

The whole story of our Lord's childhood and more especially the incident of the finding in the Temple (Luke ii, 41 ff.) make it clear that Mary and Joseph had with them only one child : Jesus.

Jesus was given by those amongst whom He lived the special title of ' The Son of Mary ' (Mark vi, 3). ' This,' writes Renan (*Les Evangiles :* Paris, 1877, p. 542), ' implies that He had long been known as the only son of a widow. As a matter of fact, such designations only came to be applied when the father was no longer living and the widow had no other son.'

The tone adopted by our Lord's ' brethren ' towards Him is that of an elder brother to a younger one (Mark iii, 21, cp. 31 ; John vii, 3). Now it is certain that Jesus was Mary's first-born child (Luke ii, 7, 22 ff.).

When Jesus was dying He confided Mary to John's care (John xix, 26, 7) ; a fact difficult to understand if He had left brothers and sisters behind.

The data supplied by the Gospels are confirmed by tradition which, in this matter, is cogent on the historical

as well as on the dogmatic side. If we accept the theory of Helvidius, namely, that they had seven children, among whom James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, Joseph, Judas and Simon were known throughout the Palestinian Church, it is difficult to understand how in this very church the perpetual virginity of Mary was accepted, and that at a date and in surroundings in which ascetic tendencies did not, as yet, prevail.

In the face of these arguments the objections produced on the other side have little force. It may be admitted that the term 'brethren' (*ἀδελφοί*) denotes brothers more naturally than cousins. But this word like the Hebrew (*ah*) or the Aramaic (*aha*) which it translates 'can be applied readily not only to brothers in the proper sense of the word, but also to half-brothers (Genesis xxxvii, 16). It is also given to nephews (Genesis xiii, 8); to second cousins (1 Par. xxiii, 21); to cousins further removed (Levit. x, 4); to kinsmen in general (4 Kings x, 13); and even to simple fellow-countrymen (Genesis xix, 7)' Durand, *L'Evangile de l' Enfance*, p. 247. The term first-born (*πρωτότοκος*) does not imply that there were younger children, but only that Jesus was Mary's first child and should be brought, according to the Mosaic law (Num. viii, 15 ff.), to be presented to the Lord: cp. Jerome: '*cum hic mos sit divinarum scripturarum ut primogenitum non eum vocent, quem fratres sequuntur, sed eum qui primus natus sit*' (P.L. XXVI, 28). And with reference to Matt. i, 25: 'And he knew her not till she brought forth her first-born son.' '*Non sequitur, ut postea convenerint; sed scriptura quod factum non sit, ostendit*' (ib. 24. Cp. *Adv. Helvidium*, 6 and 10; P.L. XXIII, 189–92). This interpretation has recently been confirmed by the publication of a Jewish inscription found in Egypt and apparently dating from the reign of Augustus. It is the epitaph of a mother who died in giving birth to her first-born son, *πρωτοτόκου τέκνου*. It has been published by C. C. Edgar, *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Egypte*, 22 (1922), pp. 7–16, n. 20–33, and is dealt with in an article by R. P. Frey, *Biblica*, 1930, pp. 385–90.

(*b*) Our Lord's brethren were not his half-brothers, Joseph's children. This theory, energetically combated by S. Jerome, is rejected by all Catholics to-day. It finds no support in the Gospels and is in conflict with several of the arguments that we have used above, especially with refer-

ence to the infancy narratives. In Matthew and Luke we see the Child Jesus alone with Joseph and Mary. Cp. Lagrange, *S. Marc* (Paris, 1929, p. 83) ; ' the absence (of other children) is still more striking if we compare (S. Mark) with the apocryphal Protoevangelium of S. James which, having supplied Joseph with sons, is bound to make them reappear in the story itself.'

(*c*) Having established these essential points we may attempt to form some idea of the kinsfolk of our Lord. The subject is obscure in the extreme. The most explicit passage is Matt. xiii, 55–57 (cp. Mark vi, 3), which relates how when Jesus went to preach in Nazareth the people asked with astonishment :

> ' Is not this the carpenter's son ? Is not His mother called Mary, and his brethren James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Jude : And His sisters, are they not all with us ? Whence, therefore, hath He all these things ? And they were scandalized.'

From this we can conclude that Joseph, our Lord's foster-father, was already dead at this time. About His ' sisters ' we know nothing. As for the brothers, two, James and Joseph, are explicitly mentioned as the sons of one of the holy women present at Calvary : ' Among whom was Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee ' (Matt. xxvii, 56 ; cp. Mark xv, 40) ; this Mary is called by Mark (xvi, 1) and Luke (xxiv, 10) : ' Mary of James,' that is, Mary, mother of James ; no doubt it is she also who is called, by John xix, 25, ' Mary of Cleophas.'

To these most certain facts we may add the information borrowed by Eusebius from Hegesippus, i.e., that James, the Lord's brother, had the privileges of the priesthood and was of the sacerdotal caste (H.E., III, xxiii, 6). Hegesippus also relates the raising of Simeon to the See of Jerusalem : ' After James the Just had suffered martyrdom, like the Lord Himself and for the same cause, Simeon, son of Cleophas, the Lord's uncle, was made bishop ; the preference of all being given him since he was the second cousin of the Lord.'

Fr. Prat (*Rech. de Sc. Relig.*, 1927, p. 135) gives the following interpretation of these facts : ' Cleophas, S. Joseph's brother, having by his first wife two sons, named

Simon and Jude, married a second time, his wife being Mary, who also had two sons, James the Less and Joseph. . . . In order to reconcile these facts with tradition we must suppose that the first husband of the second wife, Mary, belonged to the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron, and in consequence that Mary's two sons, James and Joseph, were of the priestly caste. There is good reason to believe that this first husband was called Alphaeus.'

All those of whom we have been speaking belong to the group of our Lord's relations at Nazareth. But the Gospel introduces us to another cousin of Mary, Elizabeth, who lived in Judea and was John the Baptist's mother. Moreover, many authors think that Salome was the sister of Mary, and that James and John were therefore the Lord's cousins. This is a probable theory, much favoured in the Middle Ages,[1] but it cannot be proved. It is suggested by John xix, 25 : ' Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother and His mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen.' Cp. Matt. xxvii, 56 : ' among whom was Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee,' and Mark xv, 40. Fr. Lavergne, reproducing Lagrange's interpretation, remarks (*Synopse*, 293, n.) : ' The parallelism . . . enables us to identify Salome and the mother of the sons of Zebedee ; so that the mother of S. John the Evangelist is sister of the mother of Jesus.' We find the same interpretation in Westcott, Zahn, Durand, and Bernard. However, Lagrange has retracted this interpretation in *L'Evangile de Jésus Christ*, p. 567, n. 2, and p. 573, n. 2 : ' We do not identify Mary's sister with Salome, but rather with another Mary, mother of James and Joseph.' On this question cp. Zahn, *Forschungen*, VI, pp. 339–42.

After His relations, it is well to study Galilee, the province in which He lived, about which we shall have something to say when we relate our Lord's return to Galilee and the beginnings of the preaching of the Gospel in that province. On this subject may be read, Walter Bauer, *Jesus der Galiläer* (*Festgabe für Adolf Jülicher*, Tübingen,

[1] See, for example, S. Mechtilde, *Le livre de la grâce spéciale* (Paris, 1921), I, vi, p. 28.

In many dioceses the three Marys are venerated as three sisters : Mary, the Mother of Jesus ; Mary ' of Cleophas ' ; and Mary Salome (Tillemont, notes on the Blessed Virgin, *Mémoires*, Venice edition, I, p. 459, cp. 595). However, Tillemont himself does not share this view.

1927, pp. 16–34), an article which brings out, although not perhaps without some exaggeration, the mixture of civilizations and races that were a characteristic of Galilee in our Lord's time.

On the questions discussed in this section the following may be consulted :

On our Lord's Infancy and Boyhood :

A. Durand, S.J., *L'Enfance de Jésus-Christ d'après les Evangiles canoniques*, Paris, 1908. F. X. Steinmetzer, *Die Geschichte der Geburt und Kindheit Christi und ihr Verhaltnis zur Babylonischen Mythe*. Münster, 1910. J. G. Machen, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, New York, 1930.

On Jesus and Mary :

B. Bartmann, *Christus ein Gegner des Marienkultus ?*, Freiburg, 1909. Bainvel, *Le Saint-Cœur de Marie*, especially chapter viii, pp. 229–54.

On our Lord's Brethren :

A. Durand, *L'Enfance de Jésus Christ*, pp. 219–76. J. M. Lagrange, *Evangile selon Saint Marc*, note on *Les Frères du Seigneur*, pp. 79–93. J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London, 1892), pp. 252–91. C. Harris, art. *Brethren of the Lord* in Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* (Edinburgh, 1906), pp. 232–7 (the question is left undecided, but the author inclines to S. Epiphanius' view). Th. Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*, VI, ii, *Brüder und Vettern Jesu*, Leipzig, 1900, pp. 225–364 (rejects S. Epiphanius' view and adopts that of Helvidius) ; as also more recently in *Grundriss der Geschichte des Lebens Jesu* (Leipzig, 1928), p. 25. On the same subject may be seen the fantastic theories of G. M. de la Garenne, *Le Problème des frères du Seigneur* (Paris, 1928). Cp. a critique of this by A. Charue, *Rev. d'Hist. Eccl.*, 1929, p. 176.

On our Lord's family connections and the Genealogies :

F. Prat, *La Parenté de Jésus*, *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, XVII (1927), pp. 127–38. P. Vogt, *Der Stammbäum Christi bei den hl. Evangelisten Matthäus und Lukas* (Freiburg, 1907). J. M. Heer, *Die Stammbäume Jesu nach Matthäus und Lukas* (Freiburg, 1910). The argument of these two dissertations tends toward the view that Matthew gives the legal genealogy of Jesus through Joseph, and Luke His natural descent through Mary. Heer especially lays stress on the 'Marian' nature of S. Luke's genealogy ; adding that the picture painted in the Gospel is probably from the hand

of S. Luke's master, S. Paul. It is he who presents Jesus to us as the second Adam, the First-born among the dead, the Son of David according to the flesh (p. 106). None the less, most authors hold the contrary view that Luke, like Matthew, gives Joseph's genealogy, and this is the more probable opinion. Cp. Lagrange, *S. Luc*, pp. 116–130; Prat's art. *Généalogie* in *Dictionnaire de la Bible*.

CHAPTER II

THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS. THE TEMPTATION

I. John the Baptist.

'THE beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ' (Mark i, 1) is the preaching of John the Baptist, which is why this is dated by S. Luke with such precise care. '. . . in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar . . .' (Luke iii, 1). And these are our Lord's own words: 'The law and the prophets were until John. From that time the kingdom of God is preached' (Luke xvi, 16); but also 'I say unto you: Amongst those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist. But he that is lesser in the kingdom of God is greater than he' (Luke vii, 28). So S. John's ministry belongs to the Gospel, but only in the sense of being the preparation for it.

And it is in this light that S. John is presented to us throughout the Gospels: he is the Precursor; a part already ascribed to him in the angel's message to his father and at his nativity, and now made manifest in his preaching and in the welcome it received: '. . . all the people hearing, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with John's baptism. But the Pharisees and lawyers despised the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized by him' (Luke vii, 29, 20). And his martyrdom was the foreshadowing of the Passion of the Son of God (Matt. xvii, 12).

It is none the less incontestable that the mighty impulse supplied by S. John's teaching and personality did not lead all his disciples into acceptance of the Gospel and membership of the kingdom of God. Very soon in the band of his disciples jealousy arose (John iii, 26); and after his departure such rivalries got rapidly worse (Matt. ix, 14). In the oldest records of Christian instruction we read how the

Apostles had to reassert John's true position in his relationship to Jesus, whose witness and precursor he was, without any wish to be anything else (Acts xiii, 25 ; John i, 8, 20, 26–27). The history of Apollo and of those who had been baptized with S. John's baptism at Ephesus (Acts xviii, 24 ; xix, 7) showed that the effect of John's work persisted long after his death and affected people who knew nothing of the Christian faith.

It is for this reason that Protestant critics have affirmed the total independence of the two movements, the way of life as propounded by John and by Christ. Thus Ed. Meyer[1] writes : ' John founded a sect like that of the Essenes and the Therapeutae or even more like the confraternities of Islam.' M. Goguel[2] does not go quite so far. He admits that Jesus came to S. John and thinks that for a while He became his disciple, but later left him ' because He did not share his views on baptism. From henceforth John saw in Jesus nothing but an unfaithful disciple, and—let us say it frankly—a renegade ' (p. 274). More restrained and very much wiser, J. Moffatt[3] none the less considers that ' certain indications, slight but sure, show that this movement had an independence that prevented it from mingling itself with the early Christian mission as rapidly and completely as tradition would have us suppose.'

Even thus reduced, this fancied opposition between the religious system of John and that of Christ is contradicted by the Gospel narrative and there is really nothing to suggest it. It is certain that John was not and did not wish to be anything but the Precursor, ' preparing the ways of the Lord : ' he did not yet know who was to come, but he knew that he was coming and thought himself unworthy to kneel and undo the latchet of his shoes. And he never showed the least inconsistency in this attitude of humble disinterestedness and utter devotion of heart. But not all his disciples followed in his ways nor could be excused of a narrow spirit of partizanship and of a jealous susceptibility with regard to our Lord. Somewhat similarly later on, factions formed around Paul, Cephas and Apollo, in spite of the personal disinterestedness and close union between these leaders themselves.

[1] *Ursprung und Anfaenge des Christentums*, I (Stuttgart, 1921), pp. 82–94.
[2] *Jean-Baptiste* (Paris, 1928).
[3] *John the Baptist* in *The History of Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge* (London, 1929), p. 185.

The whole burden of John's preaching was the coming of Christ; before, a mere preparation: after, nothing but a witness. But precisely because it was only a preparation it had not as yet the characteristics of the preaching of the Gospel.[1] 'The prophets,' said S. Irenaeus, 'are the forerunners of the king: John the Baptist is the last of these forerunners and the greatest, but he is no more than that.' Hence the severity of his words: 'Ye brood of vipers, who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruit worthy of penance' (Matt. iii, 7, 8). When the Master comes He will speak with quite a different accent, at once more regal and more Divine, revealing heavenly secrets, bringing the law to perfection, forgiving sin. To such sublime functions the Precursor lays no claim, for who can forgive sins but God Himself? But he preaches penance, arouses in souls the hunger and thirst after justice, and the desire for the kingdom of God.

'And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias' (Luke i, 17): and so it was that he had actually appeared close to that Jordan where Elias disappeared; with the same dress, the same mode of speech, and the same part to play (Matt. xvii, 10), and soon to experience the same fate at the hand of an evil woman and a weak king. He appeared suddenly, like Elias, and revealed himself as a prophet, even as did he.

Mournfully does Israel repeat the psalmist's complaint: 'Lord, where are Thy ancient mercies, according to what Thou didst swear to David in Thy truth? Be mindful, O Lord, of the reproach of Thy servants (which I have held in My bosom) of many nations: wherewith Thy enemies have reproached, O Lord; wherewith they have reproached the change of Thy anointed' (Ps. lxxxviii, 50 ff.). 'There is now no prophet' (Ps. lxxiii, 9). And this voice of the prophet suddenly breaks on the silence, and men run at its bidding, full of hope and fear. The day of the Lord is at hand and His coming, and what will its coming mean? Will Israel be delivered from the stranger's yoke and avenged of his enemies, or judged by a God severe in His judgements, who sounds the very reins and hearts?

John condemns the false security that takes shelter under the privilege of race, always saying within themselves: 'We have Abraham for our father. For I tell you that God

[1] *Haer.*, IV, 34, 1; P.G., VII, 1083–4.

is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire' (Matt. iii, 9, 10).

All the same, this austere preacher, clad in garment of camel's hair with his leather girdle and diet of locusts and wild honey, never imposed his own rigid asceticism upon anyone. Content to prescribe justice and almsgiving, he did not even oblige the soldiers to renounce the service of the stranger, but only loyally to practise their profession (Luke iii, 10–14).

Those to whom his preaching went home confessed their sins and were baptized. This baptism of John differed greatly from the ablutions prescribed by the law; it could not be administered by anyone to himself, but was received at the hands of the Baptist; nor was its object legal purification, but rather justice. It bore some kind of resemblance to the baptism of proselytes,[1] but the effect of this also was legal purity and initiation to the ranks of Israel, while John's baptism was a baptism of penance, symbolizing *moral* purity, and an act of preparation for the kingdom of God. The ritual ablution of the Essenes was something quite different again;[2] on the other hand, compared with Christian baptism, John's baptism was no more than an anticipation and a promise.[3] 'John answered, saying unto all, I, indeed, baptize you with water; but there shall come one mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to loose. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire' (Luke iii, 16). The promise of the Holy Ghost that we find in this and similar passages (Matt. iii, 11; Mark i, 8) reveals its full meaning only to the Christian mind: and no memory of it seems to have lingered with the disciples of John: 'We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost' (Acts xix, 2).[4]

The Precursor's fervent preaching fired the Jews and brought them to him in crowds: 'Then went out to him

[1] The proselytes first received circumcision, and then baptism by immersion. Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I, pp. 102–112.

[2] Cp. L. Cerfaux, *Le Baptême des Esséniens*, *Rech. de Sc. Relig.*, 1929, pp. 248–65.

[3] Cp. Buzy, *Saint Jean-Baptiste*, p. 166–70.

[4] But cp. the reading in the Codex Bezæ and L. de Grandmaison's interpretation, *Jésus Christ*, I, p. 303, n. 1.

Jerusalem and all Judea and all the country about Jordan' (Matt. iii, 5); and even Pharisees and Sadducees came in great numbers to be baptized (ib., 7); no less was the impression made upon the Galileans, and it was among them that our Lord found His first disciple while, later, speaking to the Galilean crowds He recalled the enthusiasm that on Jordan's banks had carried them away, and the prophet they had seen. 'What went you out into the desert to see. A prophet: yea I tell you and more than a prophet' (Matt. xi, 7–9).

And so deep was this impression that two years later, in the last days of our Lord's life, the Pharisees did not dare to pretend that S. John's baptism was not of God, but of men: 'If we say of men the whole people will stone us' (Luke xx, 6).

Among John's hearers there were some who attached themselves to him more closely than the others, becoming, in fact, his disciples. These he taught to pray (Luke xi, 1), and to fast (Mark ii, 18), leading them on towards that kingdom of God to which were directed all his activities and his whole life.[1]

So great was the enthusiasm aroused that he was asked if he were not the Christ, and on this point he hastens to undeceive his followers. 'I indeed baptize you in water unto penance: but He that shall come after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, He shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire' (Matt. iii, 11). This Messias whom he announced without yet knowing Him he visualized as the bearer of justice 'whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse his floor' (ib., 12), but soon, better informed, he will point to Him as the 'Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world' (John i, 29).

II. The Baptism of Jesus.

And then it was that Jesus came from Nazareth to be baptized of John (Mark i, 9); who, however, did not recognize him as yet (John i, 33), the Divine manifestation that accompanied the Baptism being the promised sign by which the Messias should be revealed. Such, however, was the reputation of our Lord's piety, the modesty of His bearing, the frankness of His glances, that John, already

[1] Cp. L. de Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ*, I, p. 301.

warned by an interior voice, and perhaps by an emotion surging up from the memories of his childhood, told Him : ' I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me ? '[1] And Jesus replied : ' Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice. Then he suffered him ' (Matt. iii, 15). This resistance of John, conquered by our Lord's humility, recalls the scene of the washing of the disciples' feet, S. Peter's astonishment, and the humble yet imperious insistence of Christ (John xiii, 6 ff.). He might have said to John, as He did to Peter : ' What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.' S. John's surprise finds an echo in the Apocryphal Gospels : How could Christ who was purity itself come to the sacrament of repentance ? And, later, in the Gospel of the Hebrews : ' The mother of the Lord and His brethren said to Him : John the Baptist is baptizing for the remission of sins. Let us go and be baptized by him. But He answered : In what then have I sinned that I should go and be baptized by him ; unless, perhaps, what I have just said is a sin of ignorance.'[2] The Catholic Church has understood her Master better ; He willed to be baptized in order to sanctify the waters of baptism.[3]

But He had also another motive. He, head of all mankind, wished to humble Himself under the yoke imposed by the sinful human race. It was in this spirit that Mary had submitted to the Purification, and that He Himself at all times humbled Himself, under the heavy burden of the law.

But here, as through the whole of our Lord's life, we can see the hand of Providence at work. He that shall humble himself shall be exalted. ' And Jesus, being baptized, forthwith came out of the water : and lo, the heavens were opened to Him : and He saw the spirit of God descending as a dove and coming upon Him. And behold a voice from heaven saying : This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ' (Matt. iii, 16, 17).

In this version the heavenly voice is directed to the bystanders and, as it were, presents Jesus to hem as the Beloved Son : but in S. Mark (i, 11) and S. Luke (iii, 22) it is Jesus Himself who is addressed, but the two forms of the

[1] Lagrange, *l'Évangile de Jésus-Christ*, p. 69. Matt. iii, 14.

[2] Quoted by S. Jerome, *Contra Pelag.*, III, 2.

[3] S. Ignatius, *Ephes.*, xviii, 2 : *ἐγεννήθη καὶ ἐβαπτίσθη ἵνα τῷ πάθει τὸ ὕδωρ καθαρίσῃ.*

narrative do not exclude each other. Here, as at the Transfiguration, and as in the revelation from heaven recorded by S. John (xii, 28), as also in the appearance of S. Paul on the way to Damascus, the heavenly manifestation was, no doubt, perceived by several witnesses, but in varying degrees of clearness. Those least prepared for such an experience were stirred by the miracle without any clear perception of its significance ; but John the Baptist recognized in it the sign promised by God (John i, 32–4) ; while to Jesus Himself it brought an access of the infinite sweetness of His Father's love and, at the same time, a powerful impulse of the spirit, driving Him into the desert to become immediately immersed in His ministry as the Messias.[1]

On John the Baptist, his office, baptism, and disciples as well as his relations with Christianity, cp. D. Buzy, *Saint Jean-Baptiste* (Paris, 1922) ; L. de Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ*, I, pp. 297–305 and 341 ff. ; H. Houbaut, *S. Jean-Baptiste*, art. in *Dict. Théologique*, VIII, 646–56.

[1] This Divine manifestation at the Jordan, so soberly recorded by the Synoptics, was, later, naïvely embroidered with details of a marvellous order. The Gospel of the Ebionites, quoted by S. Epiphanius (*Haer.*, XXX, 13), relates that when Jesus came out of the water a great light shone forth ; while S. Justin says (*Dial.*, lxxxviii) that when our Lord went down into the water a great fire burst into a blaze all along the Jordan. Such embellishments are inoffensive enough, but in the Apocryphal Gospels we find deliberate attempts to retouch the narrative. Thus in the Gospel of the Nazarenes quoted by S. Jerome (*in Isaiam*, xi, 2) we read : ' Factum est autem, cum ascendisset Dominus de aqua, descendit fons omnis Spiritus sancti et requievit super eum et dixit illi : Fili mi, in omnibus prophetis exspectabam te, ut venires et requiescerem in te. Tu es enim requies mea, tu es Filius meus primogenitus, qui regnas in sempiternum.' And in the Gospel of the Ebionites : ' . . . There was heard a voice from Heaven saying : " Thou art my Beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased." And again : " This day have I begotten thee." ' This last passage, drawn from Ps. ii, 7, is found also in several MSS. of S. Luke, iii, 22 ; in Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* i, 6 ; in Justin, *Dial.*, lxxxviii and ciii. Cp. Lagrange, *S. Luc*, n. on iii, 22. On these additions and their significance cp. *Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, p. 270, n. 1, on the sense of *ἀγαπητός* ' only-begotten Son,' cp. ib., p. 268, note, and Turner, J.T.S., XXVII (1926), pp. 113–29. The copyist who added this quotation to S. Luke's text ' found pleasure,' says Lagrange, ' in confirming the text of the Gospels by a psalm.' Clement, Justin and the few Fathers who have similarly recalled the verse of the psalm also took delight in this prophetic announcement. But we can well believe that the Ebionites, in inserting it in their Gospel, were influenced mainly by theological considerations, like the independent critics of to-day who, preferring this very poorly guaranteed reading, like to discover in it an Adoptianist bias, implying that Jesus only became the Son of God at His baptism—an idea peculiarly unlikely to find expression in S. Luke, to whom we owe the account of our Lord's virginal conception ; yet ' it is only in Luke that this reading has any appearance of manuscript authority behind it ' (Lagrange, *in hoc loco*).

Among Anglicans, A. C. Headlam, *The Life . . . of Jesus the Christ* (London, 1923), ch. iii, pp. 133–71 ; J. Moffatt, *John the Baptist* in *The History of Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, London (1929) pp. 125–97 ; Ll. J. M. Bebb, art. *John the Baptist* in *Dictionary of the Bible*, II, pp. 677–80 ; J. C. Lambert, art. *John the Baptist* in *Dict. of Christ and the Gospels*, I (1906), pp. 864–66.

Among the independent critics, M. Goguel, *Jean-Baptiste* (Paris, 1928) ; Ed. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*, I (Stuttgart, 1921), pp. 82–94.

I have said nothing here of the Mandæans, whose history and documents are too recent to be brought into the question of John the Baptist's life. Cp. Lagrange, *La gnose mandéenne et la tradition évangélique*, R. B., 1927, pp. 321–49 ; 1928, pp. 1–36 ; E. Peterson, *Urchristentum und Mandäismus* ; *Z.n.t.W.*, 1928, pp. 55–98.

III. The Temptation.

' And immediately (after the Baptism) the spirit drove Him out into the desert ' (Mark i, 12). This ' driving ' of the spirit is closely connected with the Baptism. Jesus had seen the heavens opened above His head and the spirit descending upon Him in the form of a dove. He had heard His Father's voice and, under an imperative impulse, had withdrawn into the wilderness.[1] For forty days and forty nights, on the desert slopes which lead from Jerusalem down to Jericho, surrounded only by the beasts of the field, Jesus fasted, as did Moses, during the same time (Exod. xxxiv, 28 ; Deut. ix, 9) and Elias (3 Kings xix, 8).

> ' And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was hungry. And the tempter coming said to Him : If Thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread. Who answered and said : It is written, Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. Then the devil took Him up into the holy city and set Him upon the

[1] ' The desert,' remarks Lagrange (in *Luc*), ' since Sinai is the most favourable spot for intercourse with God ; cp. Osee. ii, 14. Neither Luke nor Mark say expressly, as Matthew does, that Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted ; but it was natural that He should be, since the desert is also the dwelling-place of evil spirits (Luke xi, 24 ; Matt. xii, 43).'

pinnacle of the Temple, and said to Him : If Thou be the Son of God cast Thyself down, for it is written : That He hath given His angels charge over Thee, and in their hands shall they bear Thee up, lest perhaps Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. Jesus said to him : It is written again : Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again the devil took Him up into a very high mountain and shewed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. And said to Him : All these will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me. Then Jesus saith to him : Begone, Satan ! For it is written : The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil left Him. And behold angels came and ministered to Him.' (Matt. iv, 2–11.)[1]

Our Lord Himself was the only witness of the encounter, so it follows that the disciples drew their information from Him. No doubt He regarded it as a means of teaching them an important lesson. The great struggle of the Christian ' is not against flesh and blood ; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirit of wickedness in the high places ' (Eph. vi, 12). It was against the demons, and especially against their chief, Satan, that our Lord had to fight. At the end of His life He will say to His disciples : ' Now is the judgement of the world : now shall the prince of this world be cast out' (John xii, 21 ; cp. xiv, 30 ; xvi, 11) ; as already a few months previously at the return of the disciples from their missionary expedition He had told them : ' I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven ' (Luke xvi, 18). Such brief sayings gave the disciples a momentary insight into that invisible world in the midst of which humanity in its contest strikes hither and thither ; in them the Son of God unveils that enemy of the human race whom He knew so well, that ' strong man armed ' ; who believed himself safe in the house of which he had taken possession, but from which he was soon to be driven by Christ, infinitely stronger than he (Luke xi, 21, 22). The Temptation was the preliminary skirmish in this great fight.

For our Blessed Lord was willing to undergo this trial

[1] This incident is not mentioned by Mark ; it is found in Luke (iv, 3–13), but the temptations are given in a different order, the second one in Matthew becoming the third one in Luke.

that He might be made 'in all things like unto His brethren' (Heb. ii, 17), that He might have compassion on our infirmities . . . . being tempted in all things like as we are, without sin' (ib. iv, 15). Thus He would acquire that τελείωσις, that complete humanity which He had come to make His own—enriched by experimental knowledge of our life, and penetrated through and through by compassion for our state.[1]

To tempt Jesus, the devil recalls the scene of the baptism and the heavenly voice; is He not the Son of God? Then if He be hungry let Him change the stones of the desert into bread, or throw Himself from the pinnacle of the Temple, confident that the angels would bear Him in their hands. Jesus parries the attack with the word of God. Then the devil showed Him all the kingdoms of the world; he is the prince of this world (John, xii 31); he can dispose of it as he will and he offers it to Jesus '. . . if falling down thou wilt adore me. . . . Get thee behind Me, Satan.'

This threefold temptation necessarily implies that Jesus was conscious of His position as the Messias, and of His power of working miracles; indeed this was evidently the case when He first approached John, before His baptism and the voice from heaven (Matt. iii, 15). But, it may be asked, what was the true nature and function of the Messias? The people among whom He lived and who daily thronged His path dreamt of a messiasship entirely of this world; for them, the kingdom of God meant an abundant banquet of material delight, a miraculous deliverance from earthly foes, and Israel's domination over the entire world. Many times during His ministry would the same challenge fall on our Lord's ear: If Thou art the Christ, give us a sign from heaven; give us manna, as did Moses in the desert; and, pressing Him even in His last hour: If Thou art the Christ come down from the Cross. During the long months to come, Jesus will be perpetually told that His doctrine is above the spiritual capacity of His hearers, His messianic ideal too supernatural for them. The Apostles themselves will shrink from the prediction of His Passion: 'Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee' (Matt. xvi, 22), will be S. Peter's cry, and

[1] Cp. *Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, pp. 454–457, and 270 ff.

Jesus, grievously wounded in spirit, will reply: 'Go behind Me, Satan; thou art a scandal unto Me, because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men. . . .' (Matt. xvi, 22, 23).

The emotional force of this reply shows how cruelly our Lord suffered at times from this conflict between His ideal and that of His people. And the devil, in his attacks, looked on this as the possible weak point in His armour; but Jesus takes refuge behind the Divine Word, and all the fiery darts of the wicked one fall ineffective to the ground (Eph. vi, 16).

Jesus is to be the Messias humble and gentle, whose meat and drink are to do His Father's will (John iv, 34), and to obey His word; He will not tempt God by granting the Jews those prodigious signs that they so insolently demand, and that Simon Magus will pretend to give them later on. His ambition is not for earthly empires; He is king, but His kingdom is not of this world (John xviii, 36).[1]

IV. The return to Jordan. The Testimony of John the Baptist. The first disciples.

The events that we have now to relate are only recorded by S. John. If we had no other account than that of the Synoptics we should picture Jesus returning to Galilee after the Temptation, and there commencing His ministry and enrolling His Apostles. Still, we are told by the Synoptics themselves—at least, by Matthew and Mark—that: 'After that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God' (Mark i, 14; cp. Matt. iv, 12). It follows that He remained in Judea until the imprisonment, the date of which is not given by the

[1] There is no doubt that the temptation was a personal struggle between our Lord and the devil; but we may legitimately ask if we are bound to accept literally the transference of Jesus to the pinnacle of the Temple and the high mountain, or whether all this took place only in a vision. Both views may be held. For the first, see Lagrange, *S. Matthieu*, pp. 65 ff.; for the second, P. Ketter, *Die Versuchung Jesu nach dem Berichte der Synoptiker* (Münster, 1918), pp. 113–17, where there will be found a copious bibliography and careful discussion of the questions raised by the Gospel narrative. Ketter puts the baptism at the beginning of November, and the sojourn in the wilderness in mid-December (p. 80). Lagrange, with more probability, assigns these events to January and February.

Synoptics, but which S. John puts at least two or three months after the temptation.

During this interval, our Lord's ministry was closely connected with that of John, who bore witness to Him, directed his disciples to Him, and while himself continuing to baptize and preach, regarded Him from afar and rejoiced to see His influence grow. Thus in the preparation for the Gospel we are conscious of a continuity which is set before us in its completeness in the Fourth Gospel alone ; a fact in which we recognize the work of one who had been a disciple of John before he became the beloved disciple of Christ.[1] In this way we are led to understand, better than otherwise we might, the importance attached by the Church from the very beginning to the Precursor's work.[2]

We may add that these important narratives are evidently of great historical value, a fact recognized, in substance, even by those who repudiate the authenticity of S. John's Gospel and are the most active in their opposition to its claims.[3]

The Precursor had now crossed the Jordan and had been baptizing in Bethania. It is in connection with this change of *locale* that we have probably an early sign of the hostility of the Jews of Jerusalem. No longer feeling secure in their immediate sphere of influence, he crossed into Perea, as our Lord Himself did later on, and there Antipas, whose sin of adultery was soon to turn him into a persecutor, was still, in these first months, playing the part, if not of a protector, at least of a sympathetic hearer.[4] In Bethania he had been questioned as to his identity and mission by messengers sent from the priests and Levites at Jerusalem, in a dialogue which may be thus summarized : 'Who art thou ?'—'I am not the Christ.'—'Art thou Elias ?'—'I am not.'—'Art thou the prophet ?'—'No.' 'Who art thou ?'—'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord.' 'Why, then, dost thou baptize if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the Prophet ?' 'I baptize with

[1] In the Fourth Gospel, the Precursor is never called 'the Baptist,' but merely 'John.'

[2] 'Wherefore,' says S. Peter, 'of these men who have companioned with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, until the day wherein He was taken up from us, one of these must be made a witness with us of His resurrection' (Acts i, 21–22).

[3] See Goguel, *Jean-Baptiste*, pp. 249 ff.

[4] Cp. Headlam, p. 156.

water, but there hath stood one in the midst of you whom you know not. The same is He that shall come after me . . . the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose' (see John i, 19–27).

This testimony was the echo of the prophetic announcement that had preceded the baptism (Matt. iii, 11 ff.), but with one essential addition, namely, that the Messias foretold is actually come, at that very moment in the midst of the Jews, unknown to them but known to John, who is not prepared to reveal Him as yet: 'The next day John saw Jesus coming to him; and he saith: Behold the lamb of God. Behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world,' and he goes on to relate what had occurred at our Lord's baptism; with the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and resting upon Jesus; it was the sign promised by God, and by it John recognized the Christ (ib., 29–34).

The next day found John still in the same place with two of his disciples, to whom he pointed out Jesus who was passing, with the words: 'Behold the lamb of God.' Whereupon the disciples, one of whom was Andrew, followed our Lord. The other is unnamed, but this very reserve, together with the precise nature of his recollections, betrays him as the author of the Fourth Gospel himself. 'What seek you?' was their greeting from our Lord. 'Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?' 'Come and see.' This was about the tenth hour (four o'clock in the afternoon); they stayed with Him that day and Andrew[1] went to look for his brother: 'Thou art Simon, the son of Jonas. Thou shalt be called Cephas' (ib., 35–42).

'On the following day he would go forth into Galilee; and he findeth Philip. And Jesus saith to him: Follow Me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.' No doubt Philip belonged to the Galilean group of John's disciples; he is conquered, like the rest, and, in his turn, wins over to Jesus Nathanael, who came from Cana (John xxi, 2), and who is identified with the Apostle Bartholomew (John i, 43–51).

These incidents, which we have here briefly summarized, have a charming freshness of their own. They are linked up with each other with a precision that enables us to recon-

[1] The next morning, if we read πρωί in v. 41 (see Bernard).

struct the course of events in this first week of our Lord's ministry.[1]

No other week, unless it be the last week of our Lord's life, is recorded in so much detail; and rightly so. For to the Evangelist it was the prelude to a new life; and it was the dawn of salvation to the entire world.[2]

Before concluding this section we must consider something of its significance in the life of Christ.

Of the twelve Apostles, five are distinctly mentioned as won by Jesus at that time.[3] These had all been disciples of John the Baptist first. We may ask if this were also the case with the seven who remained; quite possibly it was. It is at least certain that all had known John and could bear witness to his preaching and baptism (Acts i, 22); from this alone we can form some idea of the close and effective link between the Precursor and Christ Himself.

When Jesus and His disciples reached Cana, Mary was already there, as a guest at a wedding-feast, to which our Lord and the disciples were invited as well. As the banquet wore on, the wine began to run short. Mary informed our Lord of this mishap, which troubled her the more since it might be attributed to the unexpected arrival of the disciples and our Lord Himself. And Jesus replies: 'Woman, what is that to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come.' There is nothing in the term 'Woman' (*γύναι*) that need cause us any surprise: 'it was part,' says Durand, 'of the mode of address in vogue among the ancients, full of

[1] Cp. C. J. Cadoux, *The Johannine account of the early ministry of Jesus*, J.T.S., XX (1919), pp. 311 ff., and Bernard's note on v. 19. If we put the Baptist's testimony recorded in vv. 19–27 on the first day, we have, on the second day, his testimony to the Lamb of God (29–34); on the third, the repetition of this testimony and the adhesion of the first two disciples (35–9); the fourth day (probably), the accession of Simon Peter (40–2); the fifth, that of Philip and Nathanael (43–51); and on the day but one after this, that is the seventh day, Jesus and His disciples go to Cana.

[2] These passages that we have rapidly passed in review are saturated with theology: John the Baptist bears witness that Jesus is 'the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world' (29–36), 'the Son of God' (34); the disciples recognize Him as the Messias (41), the Son of God and the King of Israel (49); and Jesus speaks of Himself as the Son of Man upon whom shall ascend and descend the angels of God (51).

[3] Fr. Lagrange, *L'Evangile de Jésus-Christ*, p. 82, makes Bethsaida the scene of the calling of Philip and Nathanael; an interpretation that seems to me less natural than that proposed above, which is also the one more generally accepted. It was at Bethania, in the group of Galilean disciples, that Jesus met Philip and Nathanael, as well as John, Andrew and Simon.

dignity and respect ; . . . moreover the very last words of Jesus to His Mother were : " Woman, behold thy Son." ' The words of the reply itself, Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, are a form of speech often found in the Old Testament[1] and in the Gospel.[2] Besides it was everywhere employed to resist an interference or decline a request ; and there is really no room for any other interpretation here. The incident is exactly parallel to that in the Temple (Luke ii, 49). Then Jesus had replied to His Mother : ' How is it that you sought Me ? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business ? ' And after this reply, which seemed like a rebuff, He followed Mary and Joseph without delay. Here, too, He vindicates His independence in the exercise of His mission, and then humbly and unobtrusively works the miracle asked for, His hour for a more striking manifestation having not yet come.

This changing of water into wine was our Lord's first miracle, and it bore the character which was to be common to all these signs, namely, that while they were real and miraculous works, they were at the same time symbols of operations of a higher kind :[3] ' and His disciples believed in Him.' They had given themselves first to John and then to Jesus without asking from the hands of their Masters any miracle at all ; but those of our Lord were to confirm and strengthen their faith.

> ' And after this He went down to Capharnaum, He and His Mother and His brethren and His disciples, and they remained there not many days.' (John ii, 12.)

Nothing is related of this short stay at Capharnaum, but the brief allusion to it is not without interest. Here we see Jesus surrounded by His family and His disciples ; of His ' brethren ' we are told a little later on (vii, 5) that ' neither did they believe in Him.' They were not, therefore, following Him as Master, but accompanying Him as a relation ; and, to be sure, His Messianic ministry had not yet begun ; ' His hour ' was not yet come. Already, however, He had disciples, who had come to Him from S. John

[1] Judges xi, 12 ; 2 Kings xvi, 10 ; xix, 22 ; 3 Kings xvii, 18 ; 2 Par. xxxv, 21.

[2] Matt. viii, 29 ; Mark i, 24 ; Luke iv, 34. Cp. Joüon's note on John ii, 4.

[3] Cp. S. Augustine, *in hoc loco.*

and stayed with Him to prepare themselves for their work of preaching the Gospel. They had come into this town of Capharnaum where Peter lived, and which was soon to become the starting-point and for some months the centre of our Lord's activities.

CHAPTER III

FIRST MISSIONARY EFFORTS AT JERUSALEM AND IN JUDEA

I. The expulsion of the traffickers from the Temple.

'AND the pasch of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem' (ii, 13). It is with this fact that John connects the purification of the Temple and the expulsion of the traffickers from its courts.[1]

[1] This same fact is related by the Synoptics as having taken place in the last week of our Lord's life, and important reasons can be given in favour of this. Such an act of authority is easier to understand on the morrow of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when our Lord's position had been strengthened by His teaching and His miraculous works. Moreover, His words about the destruction and rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem are more in keeping with the eve of His Passion; they were really a prediction of it and would be used against Him at His trial. On the other hand, S. John's chronology may not be lightly abandoned; as we have remarked above (p. xix), it is a feature of the Fourth Gospel, more than of the others, to be careful as to dating the events of our Lord's life, and John's testimony must have a preponderant value in our eyes; while a special point for consideration comes in here. We have the remarks made by the Jews to Christ: 'Six-and-forty years was this temple in building, and wilt Thou raise it up in three days.' This passage serves as a landmark in deciding the dates of our Lord's ministry; but it itself can only be assigned to the first year; 'unless, then, we are ready to reject this remark of the Jews as a conjecture of the evangelist and a fiction, we are forced to conclude that it was addressed to Jesus at the beginning of His ministry' (C. J. Cadoux, *Journal of Theological Studies*, XX (1919), p. 314). Nor are the reasons on the other side decisive; we can understand how, at the very first Passover, our Lord would have felt bound to condemn an abuse so shocking as the profanation of the Temple: in doing so He would give the authorities in Jerusalem the opportunity of recognizing in Himself He whom the Precursor had announced. The prediction of His death and resurrection was veiled and was not then understood by His disciples themselves, and two years later, at our Lord's trial, it was repeated by witnesses only hesitatingly and with variations that show that the event in question was long past. Fr. Braun (*Revue biblique*, 1929, pp. 178–200) has explained these facts rather convincingly. He admits that the expulsion of the sellers took place at the first Passover as in S. John's version, and that it was followed by a discussion with the Jews that S. John gives in detail (ii, 18–22), also that it was inserted by the Synoptics among the events of the last week, and there connected with another discussion (Matt. xxi, 23–27) called forth by the triumphant entry of Jesus into the Temple. This seems the most probable interpretation; if it be rejected, it will still be necessary to retain S. John's chronology and to admit two purifications of

This episode of the expulsion of the traffickers from the Temple is one of the most illuminating in our Lord's life. Nearly every step taken by Him was called forth by Divine Providence, whose guidance He ever recognized and followed, working miracles at the instance of the sick themselves and adapting His teaching to the dispositions and often the questions of His hearers. But now, for once, He acts on His own initiative, and as Master in God's house, face to face with a priesthood that tolerated only too willingly the transactions of the traffickers in the Temple and exploited it in their own interests, Jesus not only condemned them but drove them out with a whip of small cords; cattle, sellers, money-changers and all.[1] The impression left upon the disciples by this startling act was vivid in the extreme, recalling to their minds 'the zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up' (ii, 17). In the second century, the exaggerated polemic of Pseudo-Barnabas would condemn as a monstrous aberration the whole Jewish cult, sacrifices and Temple alike. It was the very opposite with our Lord. Circumcised, ransomed by His mother for two small turtle-doves, from His childhood assiduous in His attendance at the Passover celebrations, He had always venerated the Temple as His Father's house, and if we see Him on this occasion driving out sheep, oxen and sellers together, it was from respect of the house of prayer that He so acted and not from contempt of the sacrificial worship that there took place.

This stern action was bound to be welcomed with joy by the people,[2] but would have filled the priests with intelligible wrath. The policing of the Temple was their

the Temple. Cp. Durand, *S. Jean*, pp. 541 ff.; Th. Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (Leipzig, 1921), pp. 178 ff.; id., *Grundriss der Geschichte des Lebens Jesu* (Leipzig, 1921), pp. 35 ff.; Lagrange, *L'Evangile de Jésus Christ*, p. 90; Sanday, art. *Jesus Christ*, *D.B.*, II, 613; V. Burch, *The Structure and Message of Saint John's Gospel* (London, 1928), p. 205; Westcott, *in hoc loco*. Levertoff-Goudge, *Saint Matthew* (new commentary, p. 179), assume a transposition of the chapter in S. John, a gratuitous supposition which falsifies the date implied in the passage (ii, 20). Bernard (*Saint John*, pp. 88 ff.) concludes that at this point in the traditional text there is 'some mistake which cannot now be explained.'

[1] Cp. K. L. Schmidt, *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, art. *Jesus Christus*, col. 147; Burkitt, *The Life of Jesus*, p. 239.

[2] Jewish moral principles exacted the greatest respect for the Temple, condemning all trade, or equally all carrying of burdens within its walls. 'No one must go up into the Temple carrying his staff, or his shoes, or his purse, or even the dust on his feet. Nor must the Temple be used as a short cut. . . .' (Berakoth, 9, 5. Cp. Billerbeck, II, p. 27).

affair, and so were its revenues ; the one being the instrument of their Sadducean oppression, the other the means of satisfying their avarice, while the people were the victims of both.

A passage attributed to a Rabbi who lived before the fall of the Temple, and handed down in several Talmudic anthologies, echoes these murmurings of long ago :

> ' Woe is me, O House of Boëthus ;
> Woe is me because of their bludgeons.
>
> Woe is me, O House of Annas ;
> Woe is me because of their hissings.
>
> Woe is me, O House of Kantheras ;
> Woe is me because of their malign pursuit.
>
> Woe is me, O House of Elisha,
> Woe is me because of their fists.
>
> Woe is me, O House of Ishmael, son of Phabi !
> For they are high priests, and their sons are treasurers, and their sons-in-law inspectors of the Temple and their stewards fall on us and beat us with blows from their cudgels.'[1]

These masters of the Temple, who knew their guilt and the hatred they inspired, felt the sting of our Lord's scourge more even than the sellers themselves.

These dispersed without a word, but the priests made some attempt at resistance or at least protest : ' What sign dost Thou shew unto us, seeing Thou dost these things ? ' —' Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up ' (ii, 18–21). Mysterious words, indeed, which would only be fully explained by the Resurrection itself.

Thus, some weeks after our Lord's baptism, while the Precursor was still preaching, He whom he had pointed out to his disciples appeared as Lord and Master in the Temple itself.

[1] Tosephta Menahot, xiii, 21 ; cp. Pesachim, 57a, etc. Billerbeck, II, 570; 1,853. Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ*, I, 257 ff. ; J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesu*, II (Leipzig, 1929), pp. 56 ff. ' This lament, which reveals the sentiment of the people and the lower ranks of the ministry, confronted with a new and unlawful hierarchy, is a valuable piece of historical documentation. The author and the authority who quoted him belong to Jerusalem and lived before the destruction of the Temple.'

This was surely what the prophet Malachias had foretold: 'Behold I send my angel and he shall prepare the way before my face. And presently the Lord whom you seek and the angel of the testament whom you desire shall come to His Temple' (Malachias iii, 1).

The Jews asked for signs, but our Lord was not willing to give them any but that of the Resurrection that He foretold; still, during this Passover, He worked miracles, in consequence of which many Jews believed on His name. But He did not place Himself in any way in their hands. He knew them all and He knew what was in man (ii, 18, 25).

In this first encounter with the people in Jerusalem we see them as they always appear in S. John's pages: impressionable, swiftly won over by our Lord's miracles, yet only giving Him an allegiance of a superficial and unstable kind. And for His part, He maintained His attitude of reserve 'knowing what was in man.' This capacity for reading men's hearts is one of our Lord's characteristics which John loves most to stress; we have already seen it in His first meeting with Nathanael, recorded above (i, 47).

II. Nicodemus.

This brief account of our Lord's appearance in Jerusalem at the Pasch serves as a kind of introduction to the story of Nicodemus.[1]

[1] However, a difficulty is raised by this association of the two events. Thus Lagrange (*L'Evangile de Jésus-Christ*, p. 91, n. 2) writes: 'We are greatly tempted to suppose that this incident has been wrongly placed, and should be transferred to the last Passover. We read here (verse 23) that our Lord had worked many miracles, while, further on, John speaks of the *second* miracle of Christ (iv, 54). The teaching as to the exaltation of the Son of Man occurs later on at the time of the last Passover (xii, 31 ff.). Further, the ancient synopses (Tatian, *Codex Fuldensis*) put this interview after the last entry into Jerusalem. But the evangelist has placed it thus early of set purpose (vii, 50), explaining the nature of that Baptism of the spirit which marks the superiority of Christ over John.' Bernard (*in hoc loco*, p. 100) records the precautions taken by Nicodemus as pointing in the same direction, since they would be less natural at the beginning of our Lord's public career than at the end, when the hostility of the heads of the nation was open and declared; he adds that the preaching concerning the Passion in this place is anterior to the incident at Cæsarea, which is in contradiction to the Synoptics (Mark viii, 31; Matt. xvi, 21); he, however, concludes that these reasons do not justify the transference of the passage to another place.

It seems to us impossible to assign the events here recorded to any other place; the evangelist himself explicitly affirms their date as being at the beginning of our Lord's ministry and, in any case, before the Feast

The interview here described is one of those passages in S. John's Gospel which open up some of the widest vistas of theological science where it touches the new life in the Christian soul, and the part played by the Holy Spirit in bringing it about.

It must be borne in mind to whom and in what circumstances this teaching of our Lord was given—to none other but a master in Israel, still hesitating but sincerely anxious to learn, and holding confidential converse with Jesus through the silence of the long night. We need not be surprised to find in this chapter teaching more profound and less easily grasped than in the Sermon on the Mount or even the parables of our Lord.

Among the Jews who had been awakened by our Lord's miracles S. John introduces us to one who was distinguished by his knowledge and rank. This was Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrin, and a 'Master in Israel.' Probably he had been among those impressed by the Baptist's preaching, for our Lord, in speaking to him of the baptism of water and the spirit, seemed to be recalling memories which would be familiar to him; perhaps he had been a member of the group of Pharisees who had been sent by the Sanhedrin to the Jordan to question John. In any case, we are safe in assuming that, with his practical interest in religious matters, he would not have remained indifferent to that powerful preaching which had roused all Judea. Since then he had witnessed the arrival in Jerusalem of the same Galilean prophet to whom John had borne testimony; had himself been a witness of the miracles He had performed, and had been profoundly moved by them (iii, 2). At the same time, no doubt, the Master's reserve had not been lost upon him. Many had believed in Jesus, but this acute observer noticed that He placed Himself in the hands of none. Nicodemus resolved to penetrate the mystery, but not wishing to compromise the

of Tabernacles (vii, 50). Whatever reasons may be brought to the contrary must yield to this decisive argument. The healing of the Centurion's son at Capharnaum is the 'second miracle' not because Jesus had worked no others since that at Cana of Galilee, but because that alone had attracted much attention, and was recorded in the Gospel itself. Our Lord's death is not foretold in the same way that it will be to the disciples later on; but in a veiled manner and to Nicodemus alone. The arrangements of the sections of Tatian and of the *Codex Fuldensis* which depends on him are often arbitrary and can give us no real indication of date. (Cp. *Rech. de sc. relig.*, 1929, p. 336, n. 8.)

high position that he held in Jerusalem, and because of the timidity that he never really conquered, he betook himself by night to the Master, so much discussed, and already suspect.

'Rabbi,' he began, 'we know that Thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these signs which Thou dost unless God be with him' (iii, 2). The salutation is full of deference; but at the same time it breathes the dignity of a man who is himself Master, who has thought out his plan of action and is determined to make it clear.

Then comes our Lord's reply:

> 'Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' (iii, 3.)

The respective points of view of Christ and Nicodemus were different in the extreme, and our Lord set Himself to give a new turn to the enquirer's thoughts. Here was Nicodemus, a master in Israel, claiming to understand and judge the very teaching about which he had come to enquire; and at the very start he finds himself stopped by our Lord. None can see the kingdom of God unless he be born again, nor can the carnal man enter without difficulty into the mysteries of God, but only if led by the Father Himself (John vi, 44); he cannot enter there unless he becomes like a little child (Matt. xviii, 3; cp. xi, 25).[1]

Face to face with such demands as these, not only is Nicodemus surprised but there is just a trace of irritation in his reply. 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born again?' (iii, 4). But our Lord only insists: 'Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit' (John iii, 5–6). This second assertion is as energetic as the first, and more precise: A man must be born again; that is 'of water and the Holy Ghost.' In John's preaching, these two were opposed to each other as respectively the preparation for and the crowning of the work of preaching the word (Mark i, 7, 8), but our Lord

[1] By the term 'kingdom of God' here is meant the Christian revelations taken as a whole. The expression, very common among the Synoptics, is rare in S. John, occurring only in this interview with Nicodemus, here and a little further on (iii, 5). Our Lord's phrase γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν may bear the sense 'born again' or 'born from above,' the second being the more probable meaning of the two. (Cp. John iii, 31; xix, 11; James i, 17; iii, 15–17.)

makes them one ; it is necessary to be baptized with water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of heaven. The baptism of water, administered by John, was only a transitory rite ; in a few months he would disappear, and from henceforth there would be only one baptism, which would be at the same time of water and of the Holy Ghost ; all Christians would receive it, be born to a new life and enter the kingdom forthwith. A new creation indeed ! On the first day of the world's history the Spirit came upon the waters, brooding over and vitalizing them, and from this union of water and the Spirit all life was born. So the Spirit, resting on the waters of baptism with fertilizing power, would bring forth Christians, who would be born 'not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,' in other words, 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh : and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.' In this sentence the teaching of the whole chapter is summarized and made plain. The reason why it is necessary to be born again to enter the kingdom is because man is flesh, and the flesh unaided cannot grasp the things of the spirit (1 Cor. ii, 14). This doctrine rests on an authority as old as the Bible itself, and if in the New Testament, and especially in S. Paul and S. John, it is presented with a clearness of expression and an emphasis that is altogether new, it is because the traditional teaching has been lighted up by a new revelation ; the True Life has appeared, making it easier to grasp by contrast the weakness of the flesh.

> 'The Spirit breatheth where he will : and thou hearest his voice, but thou knowest not whence he cometh and whither he goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' (iii, 8.)

Maybe that in this calm and mild spring night, as often at Jerusalem, there came a breath of the sea breezes. And as none knew the whence and the whither of it, as it rose without warning and rustled through the narrow streets, making its presence known only by the objects that quivered with its breath, so was it with the Spirit of God. None knew the secret springs of its activity or could follow the course of its action in human lives ; it was only clear that souls had been touched and thrilled, and were all aglow with an inner vitality that could have no other source than this.

'How can these things be done?' (iii, 9). When

Nicodemus again interrupts, the irritation of his first question has disappeared ; but the faith is not yet there ; Nicodemus is of the flesh, and as yet the things of the Spirit are hid from him. And with a gentle irony our Lord replies : ' Art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things ? ' And then continuing with a mournful gravity :

> ' Amen, amen, I say to thee, that we speak what we know, and we testify what we have seen, and you receive not our testimony. If I have spoken to you earthly things, and you believe not : how will you believe if I shall speak to you heavenly things ? ' (iii, 11, 12.)

Up to this point our Lord had affirmed and explained the necessity for a new birth of the Spirit ; but after all, these are things of the earth, not, assuredly, that this world is their source and end, but in the sense that all such mysteries are accomplished here below, in the human hearts of those still living on the earth. But from now on, the mysteries that Jesus will reveal to Nicodemus are the mysteries of heaven, of which the only witness is Christ Himself. How, He asks, will Nicodemus be able to grasp them ?

From the rest of the interview we learn nothing of the reception by the neophyte of these high mysteries of faith ; not another word does the evangelist say about him, telling us nothing as to his bearing during the rest of the interview or the circumstances under which he left. For John, the whole episode is only interesting as a revelation of our Lord as the Son of God ; Nicodemus' personality is secondary and soon passes from mind.

> ' And no man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven.' (iii, 13.)

Here our Lord introduces us into heavenly mysteries of which He has already spoken, and from the first He maintains their transcendence over earthly things. Heaven is inaccessible to every creature, and only those can tell of it who ' were born in its secret and with its glory about them.' This is no more than we have already read in the Prologue to the Gospel of S. John :

> ' No man hath seen God at any time : the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.' (i, 18.)

We shall hear it again in our Lord's own discourse on the Bread of Life :

> 'Not that any man hath seen the Father, but He who is of God, He hath seen the Father.' (vi, 46.)

Teaching to which the Synoptics bear witness as well :

> 'And no one knoweth the Son, but the Father : neither doth any one know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him.' (Matt. xi, 27.)

In all these passages, our Lord makes the same claim to exclusive knowledge, and by the same title of nature and birth : He alone knows the Father, for He alone is the Son ; He only knows heavenly things, for He only comes from above.

And He who was in heaven and has descended thence, and can therefore speak of it at first-hand, is none the less the Son of Man. This strong personality who enters, whether we will or no, into our lives, is of no earthly origin, but from above. In that mysterious heaven where none have penetrated, He had His being in plenitude of consciousness and life, and this conscious life was essentially the same as that which He was living below. All the love and contemplation of that eternal life were still at work in the Person of the Son of Man, whose voice the sons of men were privileged to hear.

And then our Lord goes on at once to complete this revelation of the Incarnation by that of His redemptive death :

> 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up : That whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting.' (iii, 14, 15.)

In this wilderness below, at the gate of the Promised Land, men are liable to attack from that venomous serpent who, even in the earthly paradise, wounded our first parents unto death. Yet soon, in our very midst, a cross will be set up, and the Son of Man will be raised upon it in the sight of all men, so that whoever shall cast upon Him one glance of faith will be healed and saved. The Old Dispensation as unrolled in Israel's history was the type of the New : so that all those great memories are called up one after the other, revealing little by little to Jews—and better still to Christians

—the Son of God whose symbol they were. Such were the Temple, the type of our Lord's death and Resurrection (John ii, 19, 22) ; Jonas (Matt. xii, 40) ; the manna (John vi, 32) ; the Paschal Lamb (John xix, 36) ; the rock in the wilderness (vii, 37, 38) ; and the pool of Siloë (ix, 7).

And among all these types, most explicitly of all did the Brazen Serpent typify the Cross, at once the gibbet and the throne on which the Son of Man must be lifted up (cp. John viii, 28) and from which He will draw all men to Himself (xii, 32).

The following verses, which bring us to the end of the chapter, are like a final echo of what has gone before :

> 'For God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son : that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him. He that believeth in Him is not judged. But he that doth not believe is already judged : because he believeth not in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgement : because the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light : for their works were evil. For every one that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reproved. But he that doth truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest : because they are done in God.' (iii, 16–21.)

In these few verses the Divine purpose is unfolded ; the Incarnation was the coming of a Saviour, and not a judge. True enough, judgement will be its result, but it will be a judgement that men make for themselves ; those whose works are evil fleeing from the light, and those who live by the truth running towards its gladdening rays. From the moment of our Lord's coming to Jerusalem, this judgement had been at work ; most of the Pharisees were separating themselves from the Messias ; but Nicodemus came to Him, timidly but sincerely ; little by little his courage would gain strength, and this timid disciple would follow Jesus to the tomb (John vii, 50 ; xix, 39).

III. Jesus in Judea.

As soon as the Passover was finished, Jesus, leaving Jerusalem, went with His disciples into the Judean countryside

where He baptized (iii, 22), or, as S. John puts it more precisely a little later on (iv, 2), left it to His disciples to do so. There is no clear indication of the exact spot where this event took place, but it was not far from the place—Ennon, near Salim—where S. John the Baptist was staying at the time (iii, 23).

Throughout the rest of the evangelistic ministry described in the Gospels there is no reference to baptism conferred by the disciples in the name of Christ. Not until after His Resurrection will Jesus command His apostles to go and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. xxviii, 19). So it would seem that the baptism conferred in Judea during these first weeks of our Lord's ministry was, like that of S. John, no more than a preparation for the Gospel. None the less it had the special characteristic of being administered by the authority of Christ Himself, and of making disciples of those who received it.[1]

It is only S. John who records this first phase of evangelical activity, and a very precious piece of information it is, enabling us, as it does, to grasp better the continuity underlying the scheme of our Lord's work upon earth. Even before the first preaching of the kingdom, as Christ propounded it to the Galileans (Mark i, 15; Matt. iv, 17), He had preached in Judea. We are not told what the precise subject of this preaching was, but the word baptism makes itself heard: like John, Jesus baptized, and like him, He preached penance as a preparation of hearts for the coming of the kingdom of God.

This preliminary ministry did not last long, but created a considerable stir, and caused some excitement even among John's disciples:

> 'And they came to John and said to him: Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou gavest testimony, behold He baptizeth, and all men come to Him.' (iii, 26.)

We shall hear this cry of jealousy again from the lips of the Jews: 'the whole world is gone after Him' (xii, 19). But John the Baptist will have nothing to do with such sentiments as these:

[1] Cp. Lagrange, *in hoc loco*: d'Alès, art. *Baptême*, supplement to *D.B.*, col. 857–9.

'You yourselves do bear me witness that I said that I am not Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase: but I must decrease.' (John iii, 28-30.)

These memories of the evangelist which we are privileged to share, reveal more clearly than any other passage the great soul of his first master, the Precursor, and better still, how infinitely greater was the Master to whose hands he had been committed by John the Baptist himself. He had been the Lamb of God: now, the Bridegroom. Perhaps these revelations seem prematurely made in this which was only the dawn of the Gospel day. This will not surprise us if we remember that this was the last shining of him who had been 'a burning and shining light' (to quote words which our Lord used later of John himself) (v, 35). John the Baptist's faith was there in all its vigour before the Apostles believed at all. They, indeed, would be our Lord's witnesses, and after His death and Resurrection they would testify of Him and be the means by which the seed which was the seed of His Passion would be scattered throughout the world; but John the Baptist was the forerunner by his preaching and martyrdom alike.

Not long after this crowning witness of his, he was thrown into prison by Herod; while Jesus left Judea and reached Galilee, passing through Samaria on the way (John iv, 1–4; cp. iii, 24; Mark i, 14; Matt. iv, 12).

In this first phase of our Lord's ministry we can see His intentions clearly enough. His early efforts were made in Jerusalem, the fact that this was the religious centre of Israel being the decisive factor in the situation. As our Lord Himself would say later: 'it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem,' and again: 'How often would I have gathered thy children . . . and thou wouldst not.' After His Resurrection He would instruct His disciples to remain in Jerusalem, and there to await the outpouring of the Holy Ghost (Acts i, 4), and, as a matter of fact, they did remain there even in the midst of persecution (ib. viii, 1), making it the pivotal point of all their activities. Not until S. Peter had settled at Rome, and Jerusalem had fallen

in ruins, was the religious centre of Christendom definitely changed.

Our Lord had seized the opportunity presented by the Passover to commence His preaching, which had reached not only the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but the pilgrims present in the city, and thus formed a preparation for the mission in Galilee a little later on (John iv, 45). Many of His hearers had been touched without being truly converted, while the Pharisees were on the watch, and it soon became impossible to stay in Jerusalem any longer. However, our Lord went no further than was necessary, remaining in Judea where, like John, He preached and baptized. But there, too, the envy of the Pharisees pursued Him, and John's imprisonment warned Him to move further still, so that He might continue the preaching of the Gospel in comparative safety elsewhere.

IV. The Samaritan woman.

> 'When, therefore, "the Lord"[1] [it is the first time that John gives Jesus the name by which he will describe Him from this time forward] understood that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus maketh more disciples, and baptizeth more than John (though Jesus himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea, and went again into Galilee. And He was of necessity to pass through Samaria. He cometh therefore to a city of Samaria, which is called Sichar; near the land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there.' (iv, 1–6.)

This spring had its source at the bottom of a well, 'at the point where to-day we find Bir-Iaqub, the Jacob's well of the present time. Of great depth, there was already a church there in S. Jerome's time.'[2] As for Sichar, the excavations of 1927 have established its identity with Sichem of old.[3]

> 'Jesus, therefore, being wearied with His journey sat thus on the well. . . . . There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith to her: Give Me to drink.' (John iv, 6, 7.)

[1] Douai version: "Jesus." (Translator.)

[2] Lagrange, *in hoc loco*: cp. Dalman, *Les Itinéraires de Jésus*, Paris, 1930, pp. 281 ff.

[3] Lagrange, *L'Evangile de J.-C.*, p. 105.

This weariness and thirst of our Blessed Lord are features on which John loves to dwell. It is he who alone among the evangelists notes Christ's thirst on the Cross and His cry '*Sitio*'; he only, too, who mentions the heavy weariness that forces Him to sit by the side of the Samarian road:

'*Quaerens me sedisti lassus.*'

These features of the narrative which other details confirm, suggest, for this journey through Samaria, the date that we have adopted above: (p. xxviii). It is much more easy to account for this fatigue and thirst at the beginning of summer than in December. The midday heat is sufficient explanation in itself. At that time, too, much more than in the rainy season, it is difficult to reach the water at the bottom of the well (iv, 11); and lastly it is then that men only need to lift their eyes to see the field white unto the harvest (iv, 35).

To our Lord's request the woman gives a contemptuous reply: 'How dost Thou being a Jew ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman?' The Galileans, it is true, used to cross Samaria to reach Jerusalem, but they sometimes met with a very bad reception indeed.[1]

But Jesus will not linger over these racial antipathies.

> 'Jesus answered and said to her: If thou didst know the gift of God, and who He is that saith to thee, Give me to drink: thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. The woman saith to Him: Sir, Thou hast nothing wherein to draw, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou living water? Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well?' (John iv, 10–12.)

The change of tone is very remarkable, contempt giving place to respect, astonishment, and the vague suspicion that some great mystery is at hand. By way of self-justification the woman shelters herself behind the patriarch Jacob, common ancestor of Jews and Samaritans alike,[2] like the

[1] This fact is illustrated by the massacre recorded by Josephus (A.J., XX, vi, 1) and assigned to the governorship of Ventidius Cumanus (A.D. 52). The incident recorded by Luke (ix, 52) is of a less violent character, but no less testifies to the hostile dispositions that existed (cp. Billerbeck, *Matt.*, p. 557). On their side the Jews were coming more and more to regard the Samaritans as pagans, and in consequence to place an embargo on their wines and provisions (Billerbeck, *Matt.*, pp. 552 ff.).

[2] On the Samaritans' claim to be descended from Jacob see Josephus, A.J., IX, xiv, 3; XI, viii, 6. Billerbeck, *Matt.*, p. 559.

Jews of Capharnaum, when opposing the authority of Moses to that of Christ (John vi, 31 ff.). But Jesus, greater than either Moses or Jacob, gives something better than manna or water from a well:

> 'Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again: but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst for ever. But the water that I will give him, shall become to him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting.' (John iv, 13, 14.)

The Jews loved to use water as a symbol for the graces of God and His law;[1] and Christ, in His time, uses the same image, which will always remain dear to the Christian heart.

Believing our Lord's words the Samaritan woman changes her tone to one of supplication: 'Sir, give me this water that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw.' Then Jesus shows her His knowledge of her sad past and her present situation sadder still.

> 'The woman saith to Him: Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet. Our fathers adored on this mountain: and You say that at Jerusalem is the place where men must adore. Jesus saith to her: Woman, believe Me that the hour cometh, when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, adore the Father. You adore that which you know not: we adore that which we know: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeketh such to adore Him. God is a spirit: and they that adore Him must adore Him in spirit and in truth.' (iv, 19–24.)

Similar instances of our Lord being questioned by inquirers are not exceptional in the Gospel,[2] but they are sufficiently rare; the majority of men being more eager for material well-being than for religious truth. Most were willing enough to ask for the healing of their bodies; only a few for the solution of their doubts. To such questions our Lord replied without ambiguity, as here. The Jews, he implies, had a certain advantage over the Samaritans, they knew whom they adored: 'Salvation is of the Jews.' But their national worship will soon be extended to the whole world,

[1] Billerbeck, II, 433–436.
[2] Luke x, 25–8; xviii, 18–22; Mark xii, 28–34.

and then neither at Jerusalem nor Garizim will be its exclusive seat. God will be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

The Samaritan woman only half understood these great mysteries, but at least she recognized her own ignorance, and was ready, for her part, to leave all such matters to the long-expected Messias when He should come : ' I know that the Messias cometh : therefore, when He is come, He will tell us all things. Jesus saith to her : I am He, who am speaking with thee ' (25–26).

For the first time we find our Lord making this formal declaration of Messiasship. Only very rarely will He repeat it, and only before those whose hearts are prepared to hear it. By His miracles and His words the crowds who followed Him would be more and more drawn to belief in His claim ; but their messianic hopes were wrapped in illusions of so deceptive and dangerous a kind that Christ's declaration of Himself could not be made suddenly in a few summary words ; it must be preceded by a process of preparation, slow and of a gradual kind. Only with chosen hearers could our Lord act more freely, with His Apostles especially and also with certain of those who had been more keenly touched by His miracles and His words. This was His method with the man born blind (John ix, 35–39) : in view of the wonder of this miraculous conversion, and on the other hand of the contempt of the Jews, Jesus exclaims : ' I am come into this world ; that they who see not may see ; and they who see may become blind.' The Samaritan woman also was blind ; and knew not who the object of her worship was ; and yet it was to her that He made Himself known.

' And immediately His disciples came. And they wondered that He talked with the woman. Yet no man said : What seekest thou ? Or : why talkest thou with her ? ' (27). Jewish opinion was very severe on the subject of interviews of this kind with women : ' A man ought never to be alone with a woman in an inn, not even with his mother and sister, on account of what men may think about it. Never let anyone tell anything to a woman he meets in the street, not even to his own wife, and still less to another man's wife, because of what men might say.' [1]

Contempt, even more than prudence, dictated the greatest

[1] *Aboth* of Rabbi Nathan, 2 (1*d*), and Billerbeck, II, p. 438.

reserve in the presence of women ; but all such barriers were to be overturned by the Christian Faith.

> 'There is neither Jew nor Greek : there is neither bond nor free : there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Jesus Christ.' (Gal. iii, 28.)

And throughout His earthly life our Lord, by His own example, set the stamp of His authority on the Christian ideal of equality for all. So holy was His life that He could ask : 'Which of you shall convince Me of sin ?' without the Pharisees themselves daring to take up the challenge ; but at the same time He was pleased to place His teaching, grace, and miracles at the disposal of men and women alike. The Apostles were mystified at what they saw, and would very much like to have asked questions if they had dared. From the very beginning of their training, Jesus had inculcated in them respect for Himself ; for them He was a Master infinitely good, humble and devout, but still Master, and at the Last Supper, when He had washed their feet He reminded them of it once more.

> 'You call Me Master and Lord, and you say well : for so I am.' (John xiii, 13.)

Meanwhile the Samaritan woman had left her pitcher and gone off to the town, where she told everyone she met what had occurred.

> 'The woman therefore left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men there : Come, and see a man who has told me all things whatsoever I have done. Is not He the Christ ? They went therefore out of the city, and came unto Him.' (28–30.)

Whereupon, pouring out of the town they gathered round our Lord, who at their earnest request stayed with them for two days, a very large number believing through His words, at the same time assuring the woman :

> 'And they said to the woman : We now believe, not for thy saying : for we ourselves have heard Him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.' (42.)

There is here no question of any miracle, any more than in the calling of the Twelve Apostles, and our Lord's words

were sufficient in themselves. He stayed, as we have seen, two days among them, while they confessed that He was the Saviour of the world. This was a title freely used in the Pagan world ;[1] and in accepting it our Lord would ennoble it and make it truly Divine. No longer would a Saviour be merely one who saves a city, kingdom, or empire from ruin or attack ; but He who saves souls, freeing them from the devil and from sin.

This enthusiastic acceptance of Christ by the Samaritan crowd will cause but little surprise to any one familiar with the Synoptic Gospels. Of the Ten Lepers (Luke xvii, 11–19) only one returned thanks—a Samaritan ; of the three travellers who passed by the man who lay wounded in the Judean desert, only one took pity on him—a Samaritan once more (Luke x, 33) : such incidents foreshadowed the consummation so often foretold by our Lord.

> 'And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven : But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' (Matt. viii, 11, 12.)

Still these converts were only the first-fruits of a future harvest (John iv, 35). Jesus, who had been sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, did no more than pay a transitory visit to the stranger's land ; but by and by the Apostles would return there and gather in the corn that had sprung up (Acts viii, 4–25).

This conversation with the Samaritan woman and the conversion of the people of Sichar is no more than an episode in our Lord's life, but a revealing one. It is here, perhaps, that S. John best makes us understand how a soul draws near to Christ by faith and desire ;[2] while at the same time he gives us a glimpse of the limitless horizon of the apostolate which would open to Christianity not only Judea but the whole world.[3]

[1] *Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, pp. 32, 33 ; P. Wendland, art. Σωτήρ, in *Z.n.t.W.*, V (1904), pp. 345–53 ; Lietzmann, *Der Weltheiland* (Bonn, 1909).

[2] Cp. Lebreton, *La vie chrétienne au premier siècle*, Paris, 1927, pp. 272 ff.

[3] Cp. M. Meinertz, *Jesus und die Heidenmission*, Münster, 1908, pp. 199 ff.

CHAPTER IV

FIRST PREACHING IN GALILEE

I. The growth of our Lord's ministry—Galilee.

JESUS had left Judea, and having passed through Samaria, reached Galilee. This change both of scene and public was to give a decisive impulse to His missionary work. While John was still at liberty and pursuing his appointed task, our Lord, too, limited Himself to a preparatory ministry; He had prepared the way of the Gospel which it was now time to proclaim.

For this work of preaching, Galilee would furnish a more suitable field than Judea. The political and religious influence of the Sadducees, exercised by the High Priests at Jerusalem was, in the northern province, much more remote and therefore more weak; and while the Pharisees, no doubt, were numerous there, as throughout Palestine, they could not exert the same persistent and effective pressure that they could in Jerusalem, where the Sanhedrin was close at hand and exercised a daily vigilance over the synagogues and the whole sphere of religious life. Once more and most important of all, the population was more accessible to Christ's message, it being doubtless more rustic—as well as more turbulent—but also more straightforward, simpler, and less involved in political schemes. In this connection we may recall the thousand and one precautions that it was necessary to take at Jerusalem from the beginning of our Lord's preaching: Nicodemus visiting Him furtively by night, and Jesus Himself being unable to trust Himself to those who believed in Him, since He knew what was in man. In Galilee, at least in the first few months, activity could be freer and more open in all directions: by the lakeside, on the mountains, in the plain of Genesareth, hearers would gather by hundreds and thousands, and Jesus could freely preach to them the good news. No doubt to this first period of free expansion another would succeed, more constrained

because more under the eye of possible enemies ; the Master would have to set forth in parables what it would be dangerous to preach in too open a way. Soon, even these precautions would not be sufficient to protect Jesus and His followers against the suspicion of Herod, and, above all, against the envy of the Pharisees ; it would then be necessary to leave Galilee and seek shelter in the territory of Philip. But at least when the opposition from these different quarters made itself felt, it came too late to stifle the Gospel message ; the heavenly seed had been cast into fertile ground ; and it was destined to bear fruit.

These few words may serve to give some idea of the process of the development of our Lord's public ministry. First, we have a period of triumphant expansion ; during which the Galilean crowds were attracted and the Apostles recruited, trained and sent on their missionary work. This success having aroused the jealousy of the Pharisees, they begin to follow our Lord closely, pursuing Him with calumny and open attack. The people themselves, who in many cases had been only superficially touched by His preaching, are confounded by these calumnies, and at the same time disconcerted by our Lord's teaching, which is at once too exalted and too pure for them to grasp. From that time forward in all His public utterances, our Lord would have to guard against the malignity of His adversaries and the pusillanimity of His friends, and thenceforth He would generally speak in parables, reserving for His Apostles the more explicit interpretation which had been only half grasped by those outside. At last He left Galilee, and after a short expedition into the district of Phenice, retired into Cæsarea Philippi ; concentrating His attention during this period on the little band of His Apostles, and while He reveals Himself to them more and more intimately, He prepares them for the terrible crisis of His Passion which was to come.

Thus in proportion as the apostolate among the people as a whole became more difficult and dangerous, our Lord concentrated more and more upon His chosen band. For the twelve He reserved first the interpretation of His parables, then the revelation of His Person and office, and of what the future had in store ; while among the twelve themselves He distinguished three privileged ones, Peter, James and John, who alone were witnesses of His Transfiguration and were

to guard the secret until His Death and Resurrection had come to pass. We may, therefore, describe our Lord's ministry of instruction as becoming, progressively, deeper in content and more limited in scope. It began by covering the whole of Palestine—Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria; then became restricted to Galilee, and finally was concentrated almost entirely upon the Apostles, and in its fulness only upon the favoured three mentioned above. No doubt external events had imposed this course of action upon our Lord; but our faith has no difficulty in mounting higher and recognizing a providential disposition in these events themselves. It was to the Church that Christ was to hand over the work of preaching the Gospel and of converting Israel and the world; entrusting to her all that He was to win by His Blood, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, and by all the treasures of grace and truth that would never cease to flow from Him until the consummation of the world; but, under His invisible guidance, it was she who was to dispense these treasures and with them enrich the souls of men. And to prepare for her task it was necessary that He should concentrate upon her, and upon her leaders, all His efforts, contenting Himself with spreading all around Him among the people of God the seed of the kingdom, that later, under the action of the Holy Ghost, should germinate and offer its early harvest to the growing Church.

Galilee constituted one of the four great provinces of the Holy Land, the others being Judea, Samaria and Perea. Galilee itself comprises Upper Galilee, to the north, where the mountains reach—or even exceed—the height of 3000 or 4000 ft.; and of Lower Galilee, to the south, where the hills do not rise higher than 1800 or 2000 ft. The whole of this country, especially towards the south, is in a high degree fertile, at least if compared to Judea itself. Lebanon is close at hand, and it is upon Galilee first of all that the stores of snow that have accumulated on its heights evaporate into clouds or melt into rain; so that the mountains of the north boast springs more regular and abundant than the lower heights of Judea. Descending into Lower Galilee we find that its rounded hills enclose plains of marvellous fertility; that of Esdraelon being, in this respect, only comparable to the *black lands* of Poland. Josephus is inexhaustible in his praises of the richness of this province: 'Fertile,' he says, 'on all sides, luxuriant and covered with trees of every

kind, she attracts even the least industrious to the work of cultivating her soil, a work which is done systematically by her inhabitants, not a corner being left as fallow ground. On the other hand, the towns are numerous and the villages are everywhere populous, on account of the abundance of food, so that the smallest village numbers 15,000 inhabitants' (B.J., III, iii, 2, 42–43). We may accept with some reserve figures that give Galilee a total population of three million inhabitants, that is to say, 3000 to the square mile ; all the same, it must be recognized that in our Lord's time the population was much more dense than it is to-day.[1]

Among the products boasted by Galilee the olive is easily first (Jos., B.J., II, xxi, 2). Among the Blessings of Moses we read : 'Let Aser . . . dip his foot in oil' (Deut. xxxiii, 24). In connection with this passage we find in the *Sifre*[2] the legendary history of a man of Laodicea who was sent into Galilee to buy oil and returned bearing with him the yield of a whole field of olives ; so abundant was it that in order to effect its transport, the man had to hire all the asses and camels of the land of Israel ; and he brought them all with him, laden with oil. 'It is easier,' ran an old saying, 'to feed a legion in Galilee with its olives, than to rear one child in the rest of the land of Israel.'[3]

Further, the great plains of the country yielded fine harvests of corn. So Jacob in blessing Aser says : 'Aser, his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield dainties to kings' (Gen. xlix, 20). Then it had its orchards, whose fruits were much appreciated by the Judeans. 'Why,' we read, 'do not the fruits of Genesareth spring up in Jerusalem ? It is lest the pilgrims should say : If we had gone up to eat the fruits of Jerusalem of Genesareth we should be satisfied.'[4]

The Galilean peasants, of whom we read in the Gospel parables were often well-to-do-cultivators of the soil, pre-

[1] Transcribing a letter previously written by him at the time of the Jewish war, Josephus writes : 'If you wish me to go to you, there are in Galilee two hundred and four towns or villages. I will meet you in whichever you prefer, with the exception of Gabala and Giscala. One of these is the birthplace of John, the other is its friend and ally' (*Life*, 45, 235). The total extent of Galilee is about fifty miles from north to south, and from twenty-two to twenty-five from east to west. The total population of Palestine at the present time is about 650,000.

[2] Deut. xxxiii, 24, § 355, quoted by Strack-Billerbeck, I, p. 155.

[3] Rabbi Eleazar bar Simeon, quoted in Gen. R., 20, 13*d*. Billerbeck, I, p. 156.

[4] Pesachim, 2*b*. Billerbeck, ib.

siding over important business undertakings. Such, for example, was the man invited to the marriage feast, who excused himself from coming because he had bought five yoke of oxen and was going to try them (Luke xiv, 19). Such also was the father of the Prodigal Son, whom we see killing the fatted calf on his child's return and bringing upon himself the reproaches of the elder brother for niggardliness in not allowing him so much as a kid to make merry with his friends. The Judeans had a proverb : ' If anyone wants to make a fortune let him go north ; if he wants to become learned let him go south.' And it was reckoned that the cost of living in Galilee was one-fifth of what it was in Judea.

None the less, all this did not prevent the inhabitants of Judea from looking on these Galilean provincials with contempt. They accused them of possessing a rustic accent that betrayed them everywhere and it was this, we know, that caused Peter to be recognized in the High Priest's Court on the night of the Passion. They ignored the niceties of interpretation of the law and found more pleasure in the legends of the Haggadah than in the subtleties of the Halakah. Their local traditions differed in more than one point from the casuistry of the Judean rabbis. When Nicodemus timidly took our Lord's part against the Pharisees they gave him the haughty reply : ' Art thou also a Galilean ? Search the Scriptures, and see that out of Galilee a prophet cometh not ' (John vii, 52).

A century after our Lord, in R. Joseph, R. Akiba's opponent, Galilee produced a famous rabbi for the first time. But he had to overcome a thousand obstacles before he could win the attention of his contemporaries, and even at the height of his reputation he found himself treated as a ' fool of a Galilean ' by a woman of whom he enquired the road to Lydda, to whom his mode of speaking appeared too verbose.

And yet these much-mocked Galileans were not only rich farmers whose fields of corn, olive groves and orchards might well be the envy of the people of Judea ; they were also courageous colonists, who in the midst of hostile populations had known how to defend themselves, and in their turn to make themselves felt. In the time of Judas Machabeus, 164–163 B.C., the Galileans, invaded by the pagans of Ptolemais, Tyre and Sidon, had to call in the help of the Jews of Judea. At the head of three thousand men,

Simon had been able to conquer the enemy, but he had to take back with him into Judea the Hebrews of Galilee with their wives and children, in order to remove them from the danger of reprisals, of which they were too weak to bear the brunt.[1]

At the end of this same second century, in the reign of Aristobulus (105–104), the Jews were sufficiently strong to compel the Itureans to leave the country or submit to circumcision (Jos., A.J., XIII, 11, 3, 318). The same author writes elsewhere of the Galileans: 'Widespread in population and surrounded by foreign tribes, they have to be continually alert. The Galileans are warlike from childhood and very numerous. Cowardice is a plague which never afflicts their men, nor depopulation their country' (B.J., III, iii, 3, 2, 42). These virile qualities, developed by so many struggles, had served to temper the Galilean character, contributing to it an element of pride that even the rabbis themselves did not refuse to recognize. 'In Galilee,' they would say, 'they think more of honour than of wealth.'[2] Naturally these strong qualities had their corresponding dangers. From discontent it was an easy passage to revolt, and from revolt to brigandage, and, in fact, Galilee was the country of brigands and insurgents alike. It was against the freebooters of that country that Herod first took up arms, and there also that, under the Romans, the Zealots could always find recruits for insurrection against the dominant power.[3] And in that fact lay a great danger to the preaching of the Gospel. For messianic hopes were able to rouse an impassioned response in these violent souls, and our Lord had need of all the prudence and patience which were His, to lead His hearers from their earthly dreams to the Divine reality that He set before them.

Among the Galileans was a group that appears in the foreground of the Gospel story; that of the fishermen of the lake. It was among them that Jesus was to recruit His first Apostles. This trade itself had accustomed them to rough tasks. The lake is not large but it is often dangerous. Deep set between cliffs, rent here and there by gorges and crossing the valley of the Jordan from north to south, it is subject to

[1] 1 Mach. v, 14 ff., 23 ff.; Schürer, *Geschichte*, II, pp. 5 ff.; Ed. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfaenge*, II, pp. 226 ff., 420 ff.

[2] *j. Keth*, IV, 29–30. Billerbeck, I, 156.

[3] Josephus (B.J., II, 25, 6) states that he levied 100,000 young men in Galilee alone.

sudden and violent gusts of wind sufficient to sink a shallow-draught vessel carrying much sail. The Gospel describes several of these tempests, and records the sailors' anguished cry: 'Lord save us, we perish.' And then besides its frequent dangers, the life itself had its fatigues and its bad days. It was after one of these nights of thankless toil that Jesus entering Simon's boat bade him throw out the net, and that Simon replied: 'Master, we have laboured all the night and have taken nothing, but at Thy word I will let down the net;' words that breathe a strength and tenacity of resolution that show that these fishermen were not easily discouraged: one must get one's living, after all. For the rest their occupation was usually remunerative enough: the lake, as we have said, was teeming with fish, and the fishermen were accustomed to good catches, a fact recalled in some of his parables by our Lord Himself.

> 'Again the kingdom of heaven is like to a net cast into the sea, and gathering together of all kinds of fishes. Which, when it was filled, they drew out, and sitting by the shore, they chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth.' (Matt. xiii, 47, 48.)

Moreover, the fish thus easily obtained was sold without difficulty; the thriving towns on the shores of the lakes assured a first market, and beyond them was Galilee and the whole of Judea. For Jews, fish was the choicest of all foods. In the desert, where the crowd followed Jesus, they brought nothing with them except some loaves and small fishes (Matt. xiv, 17, 19; xv, 36). Again, when our Lord, after His Resurrection, rejoined His disciples, they offered Him what they had to eat, a honeycomb and a piece of broiled fish (Luke xxiv, 42); and when He wished to find an illustration of a child asking his father for something to eat, He makes him ask for a fish or an egg (Luke xi, 11). And if from the humble tables of the poor we turn to the banquet of state, we still find that the fish course was the culinary event of the day: when a great rabbi happened to be the guest of honour at a sumptuous feast, it is said there were provided for his delectation no less than three hundred different kinds of fish.[1]

With fish so abundant and so greatly esteemed, fishermen could not be considered to be in the ranks of the very poor.

[1] Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, I, 473.

The fishers of the Gospel were rough and simple, no doubt, but they earned their living and a good deal more. S. Peter and S. Andrew shared in the management of a boat, while S. John and S. James worked with their father; and they employed men as well. And then the two groups acted in conjunction with each other; when the miraculous draught took place, the astonishment of S. Peter and his companions was shared by 'James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners' (Luke v, 10); while a little further back, on the same occasion, we read that Peter and his men 'beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship that they should come and help them' (Luke v, 7).[1]

This little group of fishermen was to form the first nucleus of the Apostolic college, into which they would convey the habits of work and mutual help that they had learnt by the side of the lake. A word from our Lord would bring about the change, and from these humble seafarers make fishers of men.

II. The preaching of the Kingdom.

Our Lord, having passed through Samaria, arrived in Galilee, where He found a warm welcome among those who had been at Jerusalem for the Passover, and with whom the impression of His miracles was still fresh (John iv, 45). At Cana, an officer of Herod's court came to ask from Jesus the cure of his son, who was sick at Capharnaum, and pressed his suit in spite of the rebuke implied in our Lord's words: 'Unless you see signs and wonders you believe not;' whereupon Jesus added: 'Go thy way. Thy son liveth' (ib. 46–54).

After this second miracle at Cana, Jesus went down to the lake, and inaugurated the work of preaching the Gospel there. The precursor had been imprisoned, and with him his preparatory ministry had come to an end. Simultaneously the character of our Lord's preaching had undergone a change, a fact which S. Mark sums up briefly in words full of significance: 'The time is accomplished and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the Gospel' (Mark i, 15). The precise meaning of this last

[1] Fr. Schwalm (*La Vie privée du peuple juif*, p. 156) notices this co-operation between the owners of different vessels and compares it with similar association between the fishers of the Basque coast, observed by the sociologist Le Play, at San Sebastian, who share the actual fishing, the equipment of the fish-market, and the catch itself.

phrase may, perhaps, be best gathered from S. Matthew's version (iv, 17), where Jesus repeats S. John the Baptist's message in almost the same words : 'Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand' (cp. ib. iii, 2), while S. Mark introduces a new element in the words : 'The time is at hand.' The time of preparation is passed and the actual promulgation of the kingdom begun. We must not say that it is a fully accomplished fact, but it has been inaugurated at least.

Jehovah is the King of Israel and of the world, but His kingdom is misunderstood and resisted, in the world, and in Israel itself. It will be the function of the Messias to reveal and establish this kingdom, causing it to be accepted by all men of good will, and imposing it by force upon the rest. This work will not be completed in a moment, but will be progressive, so that by the mere fact of announcing it, our Lord does not accomplish it all at once ; He inaugurates it, however, and a new era has commenced : 'The law and the prophets were until John. From that time the kingdom of God is preached' (Luke xvi, 16). As we gather from this text, the work of Christ, and of His Apostles as well, is first to announce and preach the tidings of the kingdom of God. Almighty God makes the first advances : He gives His Son, and the Holy Ghost ; but to these advances men must respond if the kingdom of God is to be set up in their hearts, for it is a kingdom of sanctity and justice and can only be accomplished in souls that lie open to its approach. And so it was already present since already God was offering it to men and calling them to it ; and yet it had but only just appeared. It was, in short, a new era, for the consummation of which each disciple must pray, and also ensure, so far as it depends upon himself.

And so the announcement of the kingdom is immediately followed by an exhortation : 'Repent and believe the Gospel.' S. John the Baptist had already preached the need of conversion ; indeed, it was his whole message, and Jesus echoes his words, but to that precept He adds another : 'Believe the Gospel.' At first sight a command easily to be obeyed ; we are always glad to believe good news ; none the less this particular glad tidings found plenty of unbelievers. Men had imagined the manifestation of God's kingdom as something cataclysmic, overwhelming all resistance to itself ; but the quiet gradual growth of the

good seed disappointed this expectation, and men had to reverse their whole current of thought in order to recognize the national hope in this humble guise. Much later, the opposition between the two points of view would be betrayed in an incident recorded by S. Luke (xvii, 20, 21); 'And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said: The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say Behold here, or behold there. For lo, the kingdom of God is within you.'

There is something tragic in this perverse misunderstanding of the Jews, obsessed with the expectation of this heavenly blessing which is now offered them, under their very eyes, but they will not look. As, in this same passage, Jesus says to His disciples, 'The days shall come when you shall desire to see one day of the Son of Man. And you shall not see it' (Luke xvii, 22).

So long as this blindness persists, hearts are closed and the coming of the kingdom of God is impossible, at least for those thus voluntarily blind. And our Lord goes away repeating His untiring message: 'Repent and believe the Gospel.'

III. The calling of the Apostles.

But in His preaching Jesus is not to be alone. From the beginning He called disciples to Himself, whom He will fashion into Apostles later on. Here is S. Mark's account of this call, immediately after the passage we have just had before our eyes:

> 'And passing by the sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother, casting nets into the sea (for they were fishermen). And Jesus said to them: Come after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And immediately leaving their nets, they followed Him. And going on from thence a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were mending their nets in the ship: and forthwith He called them. And leaving their father Zebedee in the ship with his hired men, they followed Him.'[1] (Mark i, 16–20.)

[1] This event is related by S. Matthew iv, 18–22, in almost the same terms. S. Luke does not mention it, but he connects the call of S. Peter with a miraculous catch of fish (Luke v, 1–11), which seems to have occurred later on. Cp. Taylor, *Behind the Third Gospel*, pp. 166, 192.

This event, so simple, and yet having such incalculable consequences for the whole Church, and especially for S. Peter himself, is, as related here, based on the memories of the Apostle as they were graven in his mind. He seems to see, once again, the boat where, standing, with his brother Andrew near, he threw out his great rectangular net, which fell heavily, dragged by the leaden plummet into the sea, while, in the other boat, his companions, James and John, are mending their nets, so often torn on the rocky bottom of the lake. To both Jesus speaks a single word : 'Come after Me, and I will make you fishers of men.' And these gallant men take Him at His word.

> 'And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishers). And He saith to them : Come ye after Me, and I will make you to be fishers of men. And they immediately leaving their nets, followed Him. And going on from thence, He saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets : and He called them. And they forthwith left their nets and father and followed Him.' (Matt. iv, 18–22.)

Vocations of this kind were not without precedent in the history of God's chosen race. S. John Chrysostom (P.G., LVII, 209) refers to Eliseus following Elias at his first call ; but without going so far back we have, in our Lord's own time, the example of certain rabbis, the most famous of whom were accustomed to gather disciples round them ; it being considered not only their privilege, but also their duty to do so.[1] However, the disciples they called in this way were not their associates in a common work ; it was for them only to accept their teaching and be at their service. The call of John the Baptist was more like that of Christ, since those who followed the Precursor shared in his life and fasts, and were witnesses of his preaching and baptisms ; nay, more, many of them showed him an exemplary fidelity, serving him while still in prison and, after his murder by Herod, coming to render him the last duties and respects.

[1] Cp. Edersheim, I, p. 474.

It was in this circle, fervent, but a little narrow and exclusive, that the first four Apostles were trained ; it was there that they heard the first call of our Blessed Lord. S. John Chrysostom notes the fact with reference to this passage and, in fact, S. John's narrative completes and throws light on that of Matthew and Mark : 'John,' says Chrysostom, 'gives a different account of this call, and from that we can see that it is the second that he had experienced. Besides this is confirmed by many other facts. In John's account we are told that the disciples came to Jesus before John the Baptist had been thrown into prison ; but here, that it was after his imprisonment. There it is Andrew who calls Peter ; here, it is Jesus who calls both. John writes : " Jesus, looking upon (Peter) who was coming to Him, said : Thou art Simon the son of Jona ; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter ;" while here, Matthew relates that he was already called by that name : " seeing," he says, " Simon who is called Peter." We shall arrive at the same conclusion if we consider the place where they were called, and many other details as well, for example, their eagerness to follow Jesus and leave all. All this means they had already been effectively trained. . . .' (P.G., LVII, 219).

And indeed the last fact that S. Chrysostom mentions is the most notable of all. Later on, Porphyry and Julian the Apostate would reproach the Apostles for following Jesus through a blind and unreasoning attraction. The best answer to this is based on S. John's account of what actually occurred. We see there how the Apostles, already prepared by the Precursor, came to look for Jesus, passed the night with Him, enlisted with Him and became His followers. They accompanied Him to Cana, witnessed His first miracles, and henceforth believed in Him. Then followed the journey all together to Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. Finding themselves once more at home, they resumed their occupation, just as later on after the Resurrection they would take it up once again (John xxi, 3) ; but at a word from Christ they follow Him and become His men. There they leave their work 'and'—remarks S. Chrysostom, 'fishing is a trade of which one gets passionately fond'—and even James and John leave their father Zebedee, who will now have no one to help him but hired men ; and now they are to become fishers of men.

IV. Preaching in the Synagogues.

In this new period of His ministry our Lord no longer proceeded as before when He came to Cana and Capharnaum; His hour was not yet come. He was still living in His family circle; He had worked some miracles but without as yet taking up His evangelistic work. But now He consecrates Himself to it entirely; His family life is at an end. Henceforth His mother and brethren are those who hear and keep the word of God. His hour has come at last.

A few lines of S. Luke explain the method that our Lord pursued: '. . . He taught in their synagogues and was magnified by all' (Luke iv, 15); and pursuing his narrative the evangelist adds:

> 'And He came to Nazareth where He was brought up; and He went into the synagogue according to His custom on the sabbath day; and He rose up to read.' (ibid., 16.)

We will not dwell, for the moment, on this preaching, which no doubt belongs to a later time, but we cling to the precious piece of information here given us as to the custom followed by our Blessed Lord; clearly He made use of the Sabbath by teaching in the synagogue.

This fact would have struck S. Luke all the more inasmuch as he recognized in it the method followed by his master Paul. So it was, for example, upon their arrival at Antioch of Pisidia when Paul and his companions

> 'entering into the synagogue on the sabbath day they sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying: Ye men, brethren, if you have any word of exhortation to make to the people, speak. Then Paul rising up, and with his hand bespeaking silence, said: Ye men of Israel, and you that fear God, give ear.' (Acts xiii, 14 ff.)

and proceeded to preach the Gospel to them; and it was in the same way that he got into contact with other Jewish colonies in Asia Minor, Macedonia and Achaia.

And in acting thus Paul was only following in his Master's steps. Hence we can see the providential part played by the synagogue in the preaching of the Gospel. Thus Edersheim, himself a convert Jew, writes:

'The synagogue became the cradle of the Church, without it, as indeed without Israel's dispersion, the Church Universal would, humanly speaking, have been impossible, and the conversion of the Gentiles would have required a succession of millennial miracles.'[1]

The traditional form of service in the synagogues gave our Lord the opportunity of preaching to the people without coming into collision with their customs; rather He was thus able to show the connection between the Old and the New Dispensations. His ministry, in Judea first and then in Galilee, as also His miracles, had fixed the attention of the whole people upon Him, and so long as the rupture with the Jewish authorities was not yet complete, it was quite natural that He should be invited to speak to the people in the synagogue. He was free to take any text from the prophets and develop it at will, and this was what He did when preaching at Nazareth (Luke iv, 16 ff.). The scene thus presented to our minds in all its simplicity, moves us even now, in spite of our familiarity with Christian institutions and of the remoteness of Jewish ones; so we can imagine what would have been the emotion of the first hearers of Christ in the Galilean synagogues long ago.

Indeed, they were astonished that Jesus could read the sacred text at all. 'How doth this man know letters, having never learned?' (John vii, 15). Hebrew had long been a dead language for the Jews, as Latin is for us. But still more were they struck by the new tone of authority with which He spoke, more than human, yet so thoroughly human, after all. Here was something more than the litter of pedantry with which the rabbis encumbered their comments on the law; something more than those subtleties

[1] *The Life of Jesus*, I, p. 431. Rabbi J. Klausner, in his life of Jesus, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 263, also insists on the importance of this preaching of Christ in the synagogues.

At the Council of Jerusalem, where the question was decided as to what precepts should be imposed on Gentile converts, S. James said: 'For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him in the synagogues, where he is read every sabbath' (Acts xv, 21), and, as a matter of fact, the synagogue was a very ancient institution indeed. The rabbis claimed that it went back to the patriarchs (cp. Edersheim, I, 431). This is obviously an exaggeration, and the same must be said of the attempts of Philo and Josephus to make the synagogue derive from the time of Moses (cp. Schürer, I, 501, and n. 6). There is no trace of it before the exile. It may have existed in the time of Esdras, perhaps even the captivity itself. It is outside our scope to describe the synagogue service. Cp. Schürer, II, pp. 495–550; G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, I, pp. 281–307; Moss, art. *Synagogue* in the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*.

of exegesis by which they deformed and twisted the sacred text; something beyond those plays of fancy which may excite the attention but leave the soul unfed. Here were simple words, with no need of an interpreter, capable of being grasped by the merest child; and yet the effort of a lifetime would never exhaust their riches. Here, finally, was a method of dealing with Holy Scripture full of respect and yet supremely free. 'The people were in admiration at His doctrine. For He was teaching them as one having power: and not as the scribes and Pharisees' (Matt. vii, 28, 29).[1]

No doubt the synagogue walls were too narrow to hold the growing Church for any considerable time; and, most decisive of all, the spirit of the Jewish leaders was too pharisaic to suffer long the preaching of the Gospel. Events at Nazareth show us how our Lord Himself was harried and pursued; and later the Jews decreed the expulsion from the synagogue of all His disciples (John ix, 22; xii, 42; xvi, 2; cp. vii, 13). But by the time that these extreme measures would be in operation, the Gospel would have already spread far and wide, preached on the lake side and on Genesareth's plains, on the 'Mount,' and on all the roads that traversed the lands. The synagogue had sheltered it in its early days, and this was the providential part that it had to play. Our Lord was quite willing to make use of this assistance and especially, by so doing, to pay this venerable institution a certain mark of respect. On the very last day of His life He would tell the High Priest: 'I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither all the Jews resort: and in secret I have spoken nothing' (John xviii, 20).

V. Jesus at Capharnaum.

It would seem that it was at Capharnaum that our Lord preached most often in the synagogue, the Synoptics referring more than once to these discourses and to the building itself (Mark i, 21; Luke iv, 33 ff. Cp. Luke vii, 5).

[1] Cp. Reuss, *Histoire evangélique*, p. 239; Klausner, pp. 263 ff. This Rabbi remarks that 'the people felt instinctively that He had in Him something that distinguished Him from the Pharisees.' Still, as the same author observes, in reading and commenting on the prophets He conformed to the external habits of the Pharisees and scribes: 'He acted in this way until He arrived in Jerusalem, when He revealed Himself as the Messias. His first methods enabled Him to group around Him hearers and disciples, while avoiding persecution until nearly the end.'

S. John, who says so little about the Galilean ministry, records one case of our Lord preaching in the synagogue and that was at Capharnaum (vi, 59). It is a disputed point as to whether there are left of this venerable monument any ruins to be regarded with the pious affection of Christians all over the world. On this point Fr. Lagrange writes: 'It is well known that at Tell-Hum, the ancient Capharnaum, there have been discovered the ruins of a synagogue, still retaining something of the beauty of past days. This could not date from before the end of the second century A.D., but it may have been built on the site of a much older building.'[1] These ruins have been described by Fr. G. Orfali.[2] On the question of date, the author thus concludes his long discussion (pp. 74–85): 'To conclude, we maintain that the origin of the synagogue at Capharnaum goes back to the first century of our era, making allowance for later structural modifications. It seems to us impossible to assign its construction to the end of the second century or the beginning of the third.'[3]

Even if we do not feel able to subscribe to Fr. Orfali's conclusions, the ruins of this synagogue must always be a great object of interest as 'a veritable pearl of its kind, among the known examples in Palestine.'[4]

The ruins of the synagogue are not the only trace of ancient Capharnaum. 'The ruins of Tell-Hum extend along the shores of the Lake of Tiberias . . . perhaps two-thirds of a mile long and 430 yards wide.'[5] Taken as a whole they help us to picture this flourishing town of our Lord's time, she who was 'exalted up to heaven' (Matt. xi, 23). Situated at the north shore of the lake, she saw the caravans of Damascus making their way to her market and the vessels of Transjordania laden with the corn of Hauran, while from the west came the Galileans to sell their cattle and fruit. Moreover, this was an important centre for the tax-gatherers, one of whom, Matthew or Levi, will become later one of the twelve Apostles, and will celebrate his conversion by holding a feast in our Lord's honour, to which he invites all the other

[1] *L'Evangile de J.-C.*, p. 151, n. 1.

[2] *Capharnaüm et ses ruines* (Paris, 1922).

[3] On the same subject may be consulted art. *Capharnaüm*, in the supplement to *D.B.*, and art. *Architectur*, in *Encyclopædia Judaica*, which contains an attempted reconstruction of the synagogue at Capharnaum (plate facing p. 215).

[4] *Revue biblique*, 1923, p. 315.

[5] Orfali, loc. cit., p. 9.

publicans of Capharnaum. Then, in the earliest allusions to the place in the Gospel narrative we find mention of the presence there of a Centurion in command of the Roman garrison (Matt. viii, 5). In this connection a pleasant little incident occurred when the Centurion besought Jesus to cure his servant who was ill, the Jews recommending him to our Lord's compassion with the words : 'He is worthy that Thou shouldest do this for him. For he loveth our nation ; and he hath built us a synagogue' (Luke vii, 4, 5).

This incident shows that in this cosmopolitan town there could be relations of friendship and mutual service between Jew and Gentile. From this we must not conclude that all barriers had been broken down : S. Peter lived at Capharnaum, and we know how definite an intervention from heaven was needed before he could make up his mind to mix with pagans and receive them into the Church. All the same the situation, with the social habits it had produced, was bound to be favourable to the spread of the Gospel, which met there a population less impervious to outside impressions and in general more receptive than in Judea. And once it had fallen into this soil, the seed of the kingdom was bound to be carried further, like the luscious fruits of Genesareth which the caravans bore away to the four quarters of the Jewish world.

It was to Capharnaum, then, that our Lord went after the call of the Apostles ; that is, if we follow S. Mark's order (i, 21) ; and the authority of S. Peter's 'interpreter' ought to be preferred in the matter of his master's call to be an Apostle and the early days of his apostolic life. Besides, we can easily understand that S. Peter, who, through his marriage, was settled in Capharnaum, would have led Jesus to this city, which was henceforth to become the centre of the Gospel preaching and, in a sense, our Lord's home. There, then, he went, followed by His four first Apostles :

> 'And they entered into Capharnaum, and forthwith upon the Sabbath-days going into the synagogue, He taught them. And they were astonished at His doctrine. For He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the scribes.' (Mark i, 21, 22.)

So in this way the preaching of the Gospel began. All eyes were fixed upon Jesus as He rose in the synagogue to read from the sacred text. After all, He was not unknown

to them. It was here He had come after His first miracle at Cana. Here dwelt the royal officer whose servant He had lately cured ; and Peter had been married here. So they devoured His words, listening with rapt attention, and noticing the tone with which He spoke, as its note of authority resounded, for the first time, in the public ear.

And then, suddenly, in the midst of the silent crowd, oaths and cries made themselves heard. A demoniac is here ! We shall often meet with cases of possession in the synoptic Gospels, and of their miraculous release by our Lord ; this is the first, and it is the result of the first sermon that He preached.

These narratives are a stumbling-block in our time to those who claim that the progress of medical science has definitely eliminated from the world of reality the possibility of diabolical possession. In this connection the words of Reuss, a liberal Protestant, but a believer, make curious reading. In his view ' it is here a question of various diseases which the contemporary science of the period could neither explain nor cure, and which the people consequently attributed to the activity of occult powers ; '[1] but he has to admit that this theory is not sufficient to explain the part played by our Lord and its efficacy : ' it will always remain true that in all cases Jesus acted like one absolutely sure of the result of what He was doing, and that we are face to face with the fact that there yielded to His power obstinate and inveterate diseases, not merely functional, but organic, without the necessity for professional treatment of a prolonged kind. It follows that, in abandoning the traditional and vulgar conception of diabolical possession, we have in no sense changed the great problem presented by the sacred story in the matter of the miracles themselves.'

These last lines are true enough, but quite inadequate as a contribution to the problem itself. ' In abandoning the traditional and vulgar conception,' not only apparently do we not make the explanation of these miraculous deliverances any easier, but we complicate the whole matter with difficulties that defy solution altogether. Plummer has stated them as follows :[2]

' If the demons were there and Christ expelled them and

[1] *Histoire évangélique*, p. 240.

[2] Plummer, *S. Luke*, p. 136. On this question of possession and exorcism the reader may consult Joh. Smit, *De Dæmoniacis in historia evangelica*, Rome, 1913 ; L. de Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ*, II, pp. 343–54.

set their victims free, there is nothing to explain: the narrative is in harmony with the facts.

'If the demons were not there, and demoniacal possession is a superstition, we must choose between three hypotheses:

'1. Jesus did not employ this method of healing to those who were believed to be possessed, but the Evangelists have erroneously attributed it to Him.

'2. Jesus did employ this method, and went through the form of casting out demons, although He knew that there were no demons there to be cast out.

'3. Jesus did employ this method, and went through the form of casting out demons, because in this matter He shared the erroneous belief of His contemporaries.'

It would seem impossible to state the question more accurately; but surely, thus stated, it carries its solution in itself.

If, however, we wish to understand the significance of this particular case, we may remind ourselves that our Lord's whole public life was a struggle with the devil. It commenced after the baptism with the temptation, and persisted during His whole ministry, only to be redoubled at His Passion. It was then that our Lord warned S. Peter:

> 'And the Lord said: Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat. But I prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren.' (Luke xxii, 31, 32.)

And while He was speaking these very words, 'Satan had already entered into Judas, who was surnamed Iscariot' (ib. xxii, 3; cp. John xiii, 2, 27). And a year later He adds: 'For the prince of this world cometh: and in Me he hath not anything' (John xiv, 30). And this unceasing struggle will only end with the world itself, and S. Paul warns the Christians to whom he wrote:

> 'For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood: but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places.' (Eph. vi, 12.)

We need not then be surprised that one of our Lord's special works was the war against Satan, in fact He stated as much clearly Himself, when He was replying to the calumnies of the Pharisees. After showing that it could be

in no sense by Satan's power that He drove Satan out, He went on to say :

> 'But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. Or how can any one enter into the house of the strong, and rifle his goods, unless he first bind the strong? And then he will rifle his house.' (Matt. xii, 28, 29.)

And so, at the very commencement of our Lord's preaching, the conflict broke out. The 'strong man' who has taken up his residence in the house is conscious of the approach of one stronger than he. The demon's cry is full at the same time of hatred, servility and fear. He tries to decline the battle : 'What have we to do with Thee?' He knows that here is someone come to destroy him and that his adversary is none other than the 'Holy One of God.' This is a very rare expression—possibly a messianic title—which we shall find again on S. Peter's lips (John vi, 69), and its use here by the demon shows that he recognized what it was in Jesus that was most opposed, and therefore most terrible and devastating, to himself. But he is immediately silenced by our Lord : 'Speak no more, and go out of the man.' It is always in this way that we shall find our Lord dealing with Satan. And in this instance it is not only a question of keeping the secret of His messiasship, but, above all, the horror that He feels at his very presence. He has only one word for him : 'Go out.' And after one last spasm, the man was set free. The impression produced by our Lord's teaching is redoubled by His exorcism, 'Even the unclean spirits obey him.' 'What is this new doctrine,' that is preached with the exercise of such extraordinary power ?

Peter, especially, had been profoundly impressed, and we felt the force of his emotion thrilling through the narrative of S. Mark. And indeed the day thus commenced was to be, for the apostle, one of blessing and revelation in more ways than one.

'And immediately going out of the synagogue they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.'[1] S. Peter and S. Andrew came from Bethsaida, and

[1] Mark i, 29. Here, again, we prefer to follow S. Mark's narrative, which is more precise. Like S. Luke (iv, 38 ff.) he connects the cure of Peter's mother-in-law and the other miracles of this period with our Lord's preaching in the synagogue. On the other hand, S. Matthew (viii,

were now, as we see, living at Capharnaum in a house shared between them. Jesus is invited there and is followed by His disciples James and John. It will, in any case, be remembered that the sons of Zebedee were associates of Simon and Andrew, and, no doubt, it was not the first time that they had received hospitality in their house.

'And Simon's wife's mother lay in a fit of fever; and forthwith they tell him of her.' The words are restrained enough and scarcely imply an actual petition on the Apostle's part. Possibly S. Peter had not yet been the actual witness of a cure; but, at least, he had been present when the evil spirit had been cast out of the man in the synagogue, and had, as we have seen, been very much impressed. Now he was in need of help himself, and he told his trouble with hope beating in his heart. 'And coming to her He lifted her up, taking her by the hand; and immediately the fever left her and she ministered unto them.' These details, related with such precision and restraint, remained graven in the Apostle's mind. It was the first time that Jesus had entered his house; and He had brought salvation with Him. *Hodie salus domui huic facta est.*

All this took place on the Sabbath Day, but its hallowed rest did little to shield Jesus from the importunity of the crowd. Rather, the long hours of leisure in the afternoon provided an opportunity for the exchange of impressions among the people of the place. Our Lord's preaching and the miracle in the synagogue had created a stir in the little town, and the cure of Peter's wife's mother soon became known and raised the excitement to a still higher pitch. Sunset was awaited with impatience, and, as soon as the Sabbath was over, the rush came.

> 'And when it was evening after sunset, they brought to Him all that were ill and that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And He healed many that were troubled with divers diseases; and He cast out many devils, and He suffered them not to speak, because they knew Him.' (Mark i, 32–4.)

In all such miraculous cases S. Matthew saw the fulfilment of the words of one of the Hebrew prophets.

14, 15) relates it in another context, after the Sermon on the Mount, putting it, as he so often does, along with other miracles of healing, to form a group of three.

'That it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet Isaias, saying: He took our infirmities, and bore our diseases.' (Matt. viii, 17.)

No doubt this passage has a higher meaning, and its burden is man's deliverance from all his miseries, both moral and physical, by Jehovah's servant, the Messias who was to take them upon Himself. But then He had already entered upon this appointed task with these very cures, which were not only deeds of power, but above all of sympathy and of mercy in the highest degree. So Origen, in commenting on Matthew xiii, 2, puts these words into our Lord's mouth: 'For the sake of the infirm, I was infirm; because of the hungry, I was a hungered; for those who have been disfigured was my comeliness changed.'[1]

Jesus bid the demon be silent as He had done previously in the synagogue and for the same reason. He had no mind to receive the testimony of demons, and He was determined to repress a manifestation of the truth about Himself which was premature and too sensational in form. It was for this reason too that He left Capharnaum in the early morning.

'And rising very early, going out He went into a desert place: and there He prayed.' (Mark i, 35.)

After the very exciting events of this journey, this retirement can be easily understood. The people of Capharnaum had been powerfully impressed by our Lord's preaching and miracles; but the very keenness of their excitement was a danger in itself, belonging less to a concern for true penitence and for a real conversion than anxiety to witness miracles and to have them worked on their own behalf. There was also a danger that the restless ambition of Jewish messianism might be stirred into too much activity, and from the very beginning of His ministry our Lord had to moderate the too human zeal of His hearers, which already threatened to stifle the true gospel message in their hearts. And so He withdrew for a while as He would do again, later, after the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, when the Jews wished to take Him and make Him a king (John vi, 15); and He withdrew to pray; partly to set us an example:[2] but there was more besides. As Man, our Lord had need of help from on high, and it was most

[1] Preuschen, *Antilegomena*, p. 28; cp. Plummer, *S. Matthew*, p. 128.
[2] Cp. Victor, ap. Cramer, *Catena*, 280.

suitable that He should seek it in prayer.[1] Indeed, we must go further ; prayer was a great consolation and source of sweetness to our Lord. We recall His words to His disciples when they all forsook Him on the last day of His life. 'You shall leave Me alone ; and yet I am not alone because the Father is with Me' (John xvi, 32). And we often find this thought, so profound in its implications, expressed by our Blessed Lord. It is like an anchor that holds Him fast, and after days of stress and tumult, He loved to retire at night to some hillside, there to pray alone.[2]

But our Blessed Lord was not to taste the peace of His retreat for very long.

> 'And when they found Him, they said to Him, All seek for Thee. And He saith to them : Let us go into the neighbouring towns and cities, that I may preach there also : for to this purpose am I come. And He was preaching in their synagogues, and in all Galilee, and casting out devils.' (Mark i, 37–39.)

It was S. Peter, our Lord's host, who first noticed His departure and set out to find Him, followed by others who were with him at the moment. But he did not succeed in bringing the Master back. On the contrary, it was he who found himself being drawn away by Him ; His apostolic mission was about to begin ; He must leave Capharnaum and traverse the neighbouring cities and then all Galilee, preaching the kingdom of God.

Before following them, let us turn our attention once more to the day that had just passed. It is the only one in the whole of our Lord's ministry which we can follow without interruption from morning to eve. At sunrise there was the religious service in the synagogue, our Lord's sermon, and the casting of the evil spirit out of the possessed man. Then we are once more in Simon's house, where Jesus heals His host's mother-in-law and passes the afternoon with him and Andrew, James and John. At sunset the crowds come, and there is a procession of sick and possessed, whom our Lord cures, the work going on far into the night. Before dawn He retires to pray, but Peter sets out to find Him and bring Him back ; joins Him, and the work of preaching the Gospel begins. In all this we catch a glimpse of what our Lord's

[1] S. Thomas, *Summa*, III[a], Q. 21, a. 1.

[2] This is powerfully worked out by P. E. More, *The Christ of the New Testament* (Princeton, 1924), pp. 65 ff.

life henceforth was to be. He no longer belonged to Himself, but devoted Himself wholly to His Father's work and to the consolation, as well as the conversion, of the poor souls who flocked around Him. And all this beneficent activity, which from that moment was to be incessant, took its rise in Peter's house ; surely a foreshadowing of what was to take place all down the long history of the Church.

The expedition through Galilee has not been recorded by the evangelists, who devote to it only a few words. 'Christ,' says S. Mark, 'was preaching in their synagogues, casting out devils' (Mark i, 39), while S. Matthew adds that He healed 'all manner of sickness and every infirmity among the people' (iv, 23).

Then commenced that long ministry of compassion which S. Peter, who had himself witnessed and shared it, was to sum up in simple and moving words. '(He) went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him' (Acts x, 38).

Only one specific incident has been preserved—the healing of a leper. These poor people, whom religion no less than considerations of hygiene put outside the pale of society, had special claims upon our Redeemer's pity and did, in point of fact, to a peculiar extent, experience its fruits. When Jesus sent the twelve Apostles on their missionary journey, He thus outlined the programme that He wished them to carry out : 'Going, preach, saying : The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, *cleanse the lepers*, cast out devils' (Matt. x, 7, 8). And when He wished to enumerate the proofs of His divine mission for the emissaries of S. John, He bade them : 'Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen : The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them : and blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me' (Matt. xi, 4–6).

The leper whose cure is related here (Mark i, 40–44), came into the house where Jesus was at the moment, and our Lord, so far from holding aloof, had compassion on him and cured him.

> 'And He strictly charged him, and forthwith sent him away. And He saith to him : See thou tell no one, but go, shew thyself to the high-priest, and offer for thy

cleansing the things that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them. But he being gone out, began to publish, and to blaze abroad the word: so that He could not openly go into the city, but was without in desert places, and they flocked to Him from all sides.' (Mark i, 43–45.)

'Oh, fair early days of gospel preaching when the people gave free course to their admiring enthusiasm—mingled, it is true with self-interest, but untroubled by any prepossession of resistance or opposition. Brief dawn, soon to be flecked with rising clouds, presaging tragic conflicts yet to come.'[1]

VI. Conflicts with the Pharisees.

A few days later Jesus returns to Capharnaum (Mark ii, 1) to repose a little in Peter's house with His Apostles after the first mission in Galilee. But the news of His arrival soon spreads and people soon begin to flock to His resting-place. Nor are all these well-disposed and enthusiastic enquirers, who have been won by the miracles they have seen. There were scribes and Pharisees as well, who came to spy, and soon would provoke a conflict with our Lord. This growing hostility is revealed in five incidents which are here grouped together by Mark and Luke.

The first encounter was brought about by one of our Lord's miracles—the healing of a paralytic, recorded by all three synoptics (Matt. ix, 1–8; Mark ii, 1–12; Luke v, 17–26). S. Mark's is the most circumstantial and precise of the three; none of the evangelists supply a date.[2] However, it seems likely that these verbal conflicts with the Pharisees succeeded each other, as in fact they do in S. Mark and S. Luke; in other words, there is a real chronological connection and not merely an artificial literary one.[3]

The scene is reproduced with a wealth of detail that makes it seem to pass before our very eyes; we cannot consider it too closely, for it is of the greatest importance in the life-story of Christ. For the first time there come into the picture those who are to be our Lord's mortal enemies: the Pharisees. There they are, in the front rank of the audience, seated, silent, but on the watch. S. Luke, who here fills in

[1] Huby, *S. Marc*, p. 38.
[2] Cp. K. L. Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu*, p. 80 ff.
[3] Cp. Lagrange, *L'Evangile de Jésus-Christ*, p. 125 and n. 1.

the details supplied by S. Mark, adds that they came from the whole of Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem. That the excitement should have spread so far is in no way improbable, nor is there any need to suppose that we have here 'a strong hyperbole.'[1] Already in Judea and in Jerusalem itself, our Lord's previous preaching had roused the Pharisees, and it was precisely to escape their attention that He had come into Galilee. Since then several months had passed by, during which He had preached and worked miracles. All Galilee had been stirred, and it would have been very surprising if the suspicious vigilance of the folk at Jerusalem had not been aroused.

The crowd is larger than ever, but silent, being, no doubt, intimidated by the presence of these doctors whom they felt to be hostile and whose ascendency over themselves was very great. Plummer compares them to the multitude that surrounded Elias on Mount Carmel, without daring to interfere between him and the prophets of Baal (3 Kings xviii, 21). Now, as then, such indecision was to be brought to an end by a miracle, coming as a direct intervention of Almighty God.

Taking advantage of that Oriental hospitality which opened a man's doors to all his neighbours, so great was the crush of people in the house where our Lord was staying at the moment, that it was no longer possible to get near, let alone go in. And here are some newcomers, bringing a poor paralytic carried on a bed by four men. To gain an entry for him the party climbs up on to the roof, an easy matter if, as is often the case in Palestine, the house had an outside stairway leading to the roof itself. Once there, it was not difficult to make an opening into the house. True indeed, in the book of Proverbs xix, 13; xxvii, 15, is a quarrelsome woman compared to a roof leaking in winter; composed of reeds and beaten earth, resting on beams, such a roof is easy enough to pierce; and so the paralytic, being let down into the room, was laid at our Blessed Lord's feet. Touched by so great faith, He tells him: 'Son, thy sins are forgiven thee.' The scribes who are close at hand sitting in the front rank are scandalized, but say nothing as yet; inwardly, however, they are full of revolt: 'Why doth this man speak thus? He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sin but God only?' These are some of the questions that they frame within themselves. But Jesus reads their hearts and

[1] As in the view of Sickenberger, *Leben Jesu*, II (1921), p. 48.

asks them : ' Which is easier to say to the sick of the palsy ; Thy sins are forgiven thee ; or to say, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk ? ' To this the scribes make no reply, fearing our Lord's influence with the people and having no desire to be caught tripping ; and our Lord, passing over their bad faith, adds : ' That you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins . . . I say to thee : Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house.'

At the beginning of this section we compared the wavering attitude of the crowd to that of the Israelites who surrounded Elias on Mount Carmel, centuries before, and to disperse whose doubts the prophet had recourse to the judgement of God. ' Call ye on the names of your gods, and I will call on the name of my Lord : and the God that shall answer by fire (consuming the holocaust) let him be God. And all the people answering said : A very good proposal.' (3 Kings xviii, 24.) And this, in all its details, is an equally solemn occasion. The doctors of the law, sitting in Moses' seat and rightly claiming the attention of the people, are clearly opposed to the mission of Christ ; and the multitude have to choose whom they believe. A miracle shall decide. ' Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house.' For the rest, our Lord does not rank Himself with Elias, invoking someone greater than Himself. He commands with authority and the miracle is performed. That is the capital lesson of the passage, and it is as clear as noonday.

But it is also of great interest to notice how this manifestation of our Lord's power, decisive as it was, is at the same time marked by prudence and reserve. ' The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins ; ' but He reveals nothing as to His title to this power. It is plain that there is no question of a simple declaration here ; otherwise no scandal would have been caused. Nathan, of old (2 Kings xii, 13) had declared to David, in God's name, the remission of his sin ; but it is not thus that our Lord acts. His office is not confined to merely notifying a sentence of pardon accorded by another ; He *conveys* the sentence by an authority that is all His own, but, as we have seen, He explains no further, contenting Himself with the simple statement of fact.

This is the first time in the synoptic Gospels that we meet the expression : ' The Son of Man ; ' by which, from now forward, we shall find Jesus habitually calling Himself.

At the sight of what had taken place the crowds were overcome with amazement, and glorified God who had given such power to men. It was only an imperfect faith, as yet, 'but if they had been firmly established even in such faith as this,' says S. Chrysostom, 'they would have come little by little to recognize Jesus as the Son of God.'[1]

> 'And He went forth again to the seaside: and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them. And when He was passing by, He saw Levi, the son of Alpheus, sitting at the receipt of custom; and He saith to him: Follow Me. And rising up, he followed Him.' (Mark ii, 13–14.)

Both the other synoptic writers relate the event in similar terms, except that S. Matthew gives that name instead of Levi, both names denoting the same Apostle. Just as Simon was called Peter, Thomas Didymus, Nathanael Bartholomew, so is Levi called Matthew. However, the precise expression 'named Matthew,' sounding almost like a surname, should be remarked.

There is no doubt that a genuine call to the Apostleship is here described, strictly parallel to those of the lakeside. But here our Lord's method is still more difficult for unenlightened human nature to understand. Those first summoned were uncultured and without rabbinical training, but they were at least without stain; while Matthew, by his very profession, was a man of ill-repute.[2]

At the first word he followed our Lord; in fact the apparent suddenness of his call is the ground of the accusation of ill-considered action that Porphyry and Julian have laid at the Apostles' doors. S. Jerome replies that Matthew must have been impressed by the many miracles performed by our Lord; and, in fact, living at Capharnaum as he did, he could not have helped noticing the beginnings of Jesus' ministry, His preaching in the synagogue, the cure of the demoniac and of so many others besides. So he follows at once, and, indeed, as the commentators point out, his decision was more meritorious than that of the fishermen. For they had not burned their boats; at any moment they could resume their work and start earning their living again

[1] P.G., LVII, 361.

[2] S. Matthew is the only one of the evangelists to give himself the name by which he becomes known in the Christian community; thus proclaiming to the world that no one was repulsed by our Lord or regarded by Him as necessarily incapable of preaching the Gospel.

as they did, for example, after our Lord's death. But with Matthew, immediately upon his departure his place is filled ; and if he fails, as a former publican, his prospects of further employment are poor indeed. More, therefore, than any of the others, he knew the risks of believing.

In honour of his Master, Matthew gave a big dinner, which was also a farewell feast to his friends and colleagues of the past. The conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees had broken out at Capharnaum when the paralytic was cured, and it found an entry here. Jesus was surrounded by His accustomed disciples while, on his part, Matthew had invited those publicans and sinners who were his friends. We shall often meet these terms side by side in the Gospels, but in such a context the term sinner must not be taken in its fullest sense. Rather it denotes those who, from the standpoint of the current Jewish morality, were legally unclean. Very many of these followed our Lord as they had come in large numbers to be baptized by John ; but to the Pharisees their touch was a defilement ; and to sit at the same table with them was a scandalous act.

It is, therefore, likely that the scribes did not actually go into the house, but they kept a watch on it from outside. As usual, they did not approach Jesus directly, having been once reduced to silence by Him after the paralytic's cure. Instead they had recourse to His disciples, expecting an easy triumph over these simple souls, ignorant and intimidated in the presence of the scribes whose disciples of yesterday they were ; possibly they hoped to disturb them and even detach them altogether from their allegiance to Christ. But our Lord intervened, using the very weapon they had put into His hands : ' They that are well,' said He, ' have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.' Adding, according to S. Matthew, ' Go then and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice ' (Osee vi, 6), and concluding with words recorded by all three synoptics, ' I am not come to call the just, but sinners.'

These last words reveal our Saviour's compassion : but they hint at a great mystery as well. ' What,' it may be asked, ' is the " coming " of which He speaks ? ' He had already alluded to it on the morrow of His first day's ministry at Capharnaum, when He had enlisted Peter in the work of preaching the Gospel in Galilee : ' Let us go into the neighbouring towns and cities, that I may preach there also, for

to this purpose am I come,' or according to S. Luke's account (iv, 43) 'for therefore am I sent' (ἀπεστάλην). These words, so full of meaning for us, were too veiled in expression to be understood fully by the disciples, but in these fresh circumstances our Lord repeats them with greater emphasis: 'the coming forth' to which He referred at Capharnaum might be understood strictly of His leaving that city; but the 'coming' in question here has clearly a wider and deeper sense.[1]

It is, no doubt, in order to record this conflict with the Pharisees, and the teaching that followed, that the Synoptics have related S. Matthew's call and farewell feast; while the call of the other Apostles is, for the most part, passed over in silence; and it was to throw further light on the growing antagonism between Christ and these Jewish teachers that our Lord's instruction on fasting is here set down.

> 'And the disciples of John and the Pharisees used to fast: and they come, and say to Him: Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast: but Thy disciples do not fast? And Jesus saith to them: Can the children of the marriage fast, as long as the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them: and then they shall fast in those days.' (Mark ii, 18–20.)[2]

[1] Cp. *Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, p. 277.

[2] In recording this incident, S. Mark gives no hint as to when it occurred, except that there had been a day which both the Pharisees and S. John's disciples had kept as a fast. S. Matthew connects this narrative with the meal referred to above: 'Then,' he says, 'came to Him the disciples of John saying . . .' (ix, 14). The fast assigned to John's disciples should be noticed here. S. Luke connects this portion of the narrative more closely with what has gone before; according to him this new question about fasting is put by the scribes and Pharisees who came to interrogate our Lord's disciples on the circumstances of Levi's feast with Him. It is only a sequel to the discussion, or rather interrogation, that took place then: 'And they said to Him: Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and the disciples of the Pharisees in like manner, but Thine eat and drink?' (Luke v, 33). These are merely differences of redaction, of no great importance. It is just a question of whether the dinner given to the publicans gave rise to this double discussion, or whether the two events have been brought together by the evangelist on account of the similarity of the teaching that they convey. In any case, it is a secondary point, and one perhaps that can never be settled. The part assigned by S. Matthew to John's disciples is of greater interest. No doubt, from the beginning, the Pharisees were opposed to the Baptist's ministry, and remained hostile to the end (Mark xi, 27 ff.); but they had an interest in opposing John and Jesus to each other, and the jealousy of some at least

The only obligatory fast among the Jews was that of the Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi, 29) ; but fasts were ordered from time to time by national or local authorities, such as the Sanhedrin or synagogue, on the occasion of certain calamities or on anniversaries of certain kinds. Such fasts were appointed to be kept on the second or fifth days of the week, i.e., on Monday or Thursday, and some of the Pharisees extended this custom to all the Mondays and Thursdays of the year.[1] Also these were the two days when the Jewish faithful met at the synagogue.

S. John's disciples also fasted, thus following their master's example, as our Lord's disciples did His.

> 'For John came neither eating nor drinking : and they say : He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say : Behold a man that is a glutton and a wine-drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners. And wisdom is justified by her children.' (Matt. xi, 18, 19.)

In replying to this fresh charge our Lord compared Himself to the bridegroom, and His disciples to the 'children of the bridegroom' who, while the bridegroom is with them, cannot be induced to fast.[2]

And when addressed to S. John's disciples, His reply came with peculiar force. For in his final testimony John had compared Jesus to a bridegroom, and himself to the bridegroom's friend (John iii, 29). This could not have been forgotten by his disciples, and our Lord's reply at this time would have called up the memory of so solemn a testimony and one so quickly lost to view.[3]

And our Lord went on to say : 'But the days will come

of the Precursor's disciples (John iii, 26) made them willing instruments in their hands. Finally, we may observe that although the discussion was concerned only with fasting, Luke mentions both fasting and prayer—a very natural association of ideas, and one frequently found in the New Testament as a whole (Luke ii, 37 ; Mark ix, 28 ; Matt. xvii, 20 ; Acts xiii, 3 ; xiv, 22). Cp. Jacquier, *Didaché*, p. 180.

[1] Megillat, *Taanit*, ch. xii, appendix. Cp. Luke xviii, 12 ; *Didaché*, 8.

[2] Or, as S. Matthew has it, they cannot 'mourn.' With the Jews, in fact, fasting often appeared as an institution connected with mourning, and it may have been so with the fast kept by the Pharisees on this particular day. In any case, during the week of marriage festivities, there could be no question of either mourning or fast (Billerbeck, I, p. 564 ff.).

[3] On the 'children of the bridegroom' and the 'friends of the bridegroom,' cp. Billerbeck, I, p. 500–4. Edersheim (I, p. 664) thinks the first expression Galilean, and the second Judean, but the Talmudic texts quoted by Billerbeck do not confirm this distinction.

when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them : and then they shall fast in those days.'

This sentence is found word for word in the three synoptics. Its tone is solemn, and it is evidently not a mere statement, but a prophecy. By the expression 'the bridegroom shall be taken away' our Lord hints at the violent character of the death by which He will be taken from His disciples, and which He foretells here for the first time. And from this fact Loisy draws an argument against the authenticity of these words of our Lord, although admitting that they were spoken later on. 'If,' he says, 'we cannot admit that Jesus spoke of His last end in public, and especially at so early a period in His ministry, we have no difficulty in supposing that the incident is out of its chronological order here' (I, 498). But there is really no need to resort to this expedient. We have noticed above the veiled but discernible mention of our Lord's pre-existence and of His coming into the world, and there is no reason at all to be surprised at such a foreshadowing of His Passion. In both cases our Lord's words went beyond the grasp of His immediate hearers, but to us they reveal His inner thought, and even to them, later, they would have been a source of comfort and of light.

Jesus then goes on to develop His thought in two short parables. 'No man seweth a piece of raw cloth to an old garment : otherwise the new piecing taketh away from the old, and there is made a greater rent. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles : otherwise the wine will burst the bottles : and both the wine will be spilled and the bottles will be lost' (Mark ii, 21, 22). The first of these is recorded by S. Luke (v, 36) in a slightly different form, which lends to it even greater force. 'No man putteth a piece from a new garment upon an old garment : otherwise he both rendeth the new, and the piece taken from the new agreeth not with the old.'

And so to submit to the precepts of the Pharisees and to make the Apostles do so, too, would be to tear Christianity in pieces in order to patch up Judaism. These two short passages of incontestable authenticity, with all their far-reaching implications, must always remain indelibly graven on our minds.[1]

[1] Reuss (*Histoire evangélique*, p. 260) writes on the second of these parables : 'The figure of the wine is extremely significant ; and since it is impossible to doubt its authenticity, it comes before us as one of the most positive and absolute statements in the Gospel in proof of the fact that

But to understand them properly we must observe that what is here in question is not the law itself, but the fasts of the Pharisees and, if we like, the whole collection of the pharisaic observances of the time. This is the old cloth that cannot be repaired, and the old bottle that the new wine must inevitably burst. In His teaching on this point our Lord never changed or wavered in the slightest degree. Nor is it less worthy of notice that, from the very beginning of His ministry, He offered such radical and definite opposition to teaching which the doctors imposed as equal to the law itself and to which the people adhered with blind submission.

S. Luke develops the meaning of the second parable and adds :

> 'But new wine must be put into new bottles : and both are preserved. And no man drinking old hath presently a mind to new : for he saith : The old is better.' (Luke v, 38, 39.)

To savour the new quality of the Gospel, then, it was necessary for a man to disaccustom himself to the spiritual nourishment of the past, and to make his soul anew. Our view is also that of S. Chrysostom (P.G., LVII, 367, 368) and of S. Jerome (P.L., XXVI, 57) except for one modification in detail. Time was needed for the Apostles to adapt themselves to the Gospel, not precisely because they were too weak to cope with the fasts that the Pharisees prescribed—for they were morally and spiritually as strong as the Pharisees themselves, and they themselves had been disciplined by John and trained in the practice of fasting ; but it was because the practical living of the Gospel required an interior disposition and habit that could not be fully acquired at once.

In S. Mark and S. Luke two incidents follow at this point which S. Matthew puts much later on (xii, 1, 14). No doubt it is not easy to decide their real date, but we shall adopt that of the second and third evangelists, which seems to fit them better into the main order of events.

The first incident is that of the plucking the ears of corn

our Lord Himself measured with unfailing accuracy the distance between His religion and that of the Law. And if there seem to be texts which tell in the opposite direction, it is for critical and exegetical science to explain them, so as to in no way weaken the force and significance of the passage before us. The new wine cannot be put into the old bottles, and the spirit of the Gospel can never be confined within the forms of the Law. It will, of necessity, break them.' Cp. Loisy, *Evangiles Synoptiques*, I, 502.

by His disciples (Mark ii, 23–28). There is no external fact to tell us when this incident occurred. S. Matthew's ' at that time ' does nothing to clear up the point ; while S. Luke's reference to the ' second first Sabbath ' is undeniably very obscure.[1]

The only indication of time is to be found in the narrative itself. Corn is already well-formed in the ear, which means that spring was well advanced, and that this ' Sabbath ' must be put between Passover and Pentecost. From eight to ten months have passed since the Galilean ministry began ; and to the preaching and miracles with which these months have been filled, the people have responded first with keen enthusiasm, soon to be succeeded by hesitation and doubt. The work of preaching the Gospel has been fiercely opposed by the ' enemy,' and not without success ; and it is this struggle that we can see still in progress in the two incidents related here.

In both cases the subject of the dispute is the same, i.e., the proper observance of the Sabbath Day. Jesus and His disciples have gone out for a short walk through the corn fields, nor do the Pharisees find any fault with this. They are there themselves, and no one concerned has gone farther than is allowed on the Sabbath Day. Nor is there, as Père Lagrange points out, any question of the violation of private property, ' for it has always been, and still is, the custom in the East for anyone who is hungry to pick, as he passes, a few ears of corn, or figs or grapes, as the case may be.'[2]

No ; the ground of the Pharisees' application is that the disciples of Jesus were breaking the law that forbids harvesting on the Sabbath Day (Ex. xxxiv, 21), a precept in the application of which they had gone to absurd lengths. ' No one may cut a branch or a leaf or gather a fruit.'[3]

It is to be observed that our Lord does not enter into any discussion of the casuistical point, when He could easily have pointed out that this interpretation, by exaggerating the Sabbath Law, really rendered it ineffective ; but such teaching would have had little bearing on the situation.

[1] Cp. S. Jerome, *Epist. to Nepotian*, lii, 8 ; P.L., XXII, 534. Strack-Billerbeck (ii, p. 158) explain this as being the Second Sabbath after 15 Nisan.

[2] Lagrange, *S. Marc*, p. 51.

[3] Philo, *Vita Mosis*, ii, 4 : ' *Metens sabbato vel tantillum reus est. Et vellere spicas est species messionis. Et quicumque aliquid decerpit a germinatione sua, reus est sub nomine metentis* ' (Maimonides, Schabb. 8, quoted by Strack-Billerbeck, I, p. 611).

The Sabbath Law itself would soon be obsolete. So He attacked the root of the difficulty, showing that necessity prevails against a positive law: '*Noth kennt kein Gebot*,' remarks Holtzmann (p. 92), and in this case he is right.

And for proof, our Lord begins with the example of David, whose universal authority no one present would have dared contest. If he, urged on by hunger, could eat the bread reserved to the priests, Jesus' disciples, in like case, could without fault pluck the ears of corn on the Sabbath Day.[1]

This argument was decisive, so far as the Pharisees were concerned, but for us the most important principles were those laid down by our Lord in bringing the discussion to a close. 'And He said to them: The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath also' (Mark ii, 27–28). The words used by S. Mark in introducing this double sentence quite possibly imply some interruption in the course of our Lord's words; and, in this case, we shall see shortly how S. Matthew inserts another argument at this point. But the principle as stated is that which dominates the whole discussion: The Sabbath for man, and not man for the Sabbath. It follows that this positive law, which has no other end than man's well-being, must give way when it is a question of necessity. We know how, in the time of the Machabees, the Jews learnt by bitter experience that they had to defend themselves, weapons in hand, on the Sabbath Day (1 Mach. ii, 39–42; Jos., A.J., XII, vi, 2); so the principle involved was not altogether unknown. But it was one thing to apply it in a case of extreme urgency, and another to lay it down for its own sake, bringing it into the full light of day, and drawing its full consequences, as was done on this occasion by our Blessed Lord.

'Therefore the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath also.' As at the cure of the paralytic, so now our Lord calls Himself by this title, and quietly but unflinchingly makes known the divine powers with which He is clothed. Consequently, if the observance of the Sabbath is a positive law, instituted for man's good, the Son of Man is its Master, and can

[1] Cp. Lagrange, *S. Marc*, pp. 54 ff., who, explaining the reference to Abiatha, adds: 'The case is one of those which cause Jerome to exclaim: "Ex quibus universis perspicuum est, apostolos et evangelistas in interpretatione veterum scripturarum sensum quæsisse, non verba nec magno opere de ordine sermonibusque curasse, dum intellectui res pateret"' (P.L., XXII, 576).

not only dispense from it, but abrogate it altogether. This conclusion was not yet fully drawn out, but it had been affirmed in principle and its fuller statement would follow later on.[1]

In S. Matthew's account a second argument is added: '. . . Have ye not read in the law,' says our Lord, 'that the priests in the temple break the Sabbath, and are without blame? But I tell you that there is here a greater than the temple' (xii, 5, 6). Here is no longer any question of necessity as in the preceding example. If the work done by the priests in the temple is lawful, even on the Sabbath, it is because it is work of a holy and religious kind. 'Now,' Jesus continues, 'there is here a greater than the temple.' Many manuscripts read *some one* greater; but the version *some thing* greater is to be preferred.

The priests in the Temple were covered by the sanctity of the place and of their work; but there was something beyond all that here. Our Lord does not go into further details, contenting Himself with opening up before His hearers a limitless field of thought; those who can enter upon it will be guided by the light of the Gospel and led forward, step by step, to the sublimest truths. In the light of this truth, less importance need be attached to the variations in the argument than would appear at first sight; all that is holy proceeds from the personal holiness of Christ, who sanctifies both His Apostles and their work. And our Lord adds: 'If you knew what this meaneth: I will have mercy and not sacrifice: you would never have condemned the innocent.' We have already met with this quotation from Osee on our Lord's lips, when the paralytic was cured; and there is no difficulty in understanding that He would have used it in opposition to His adversaries in similar circumstances on more occasions than one.

One last lesson can be drawn from the whole incident. The disciples were urged on by hunger, which is why they plucked the corn and why they were excused for doing so by our Lord. But He did not work any miracle to release either them or Himself from the necessities of daily life. 'If Thou be the Son of God,' had said the tempter, 'command that these stones be made bread.' But Jesus had

[1] In this connection may be read the admirable passage in S. Chrysostom on the prudence by which Christ revealed by degrees both Himself and His Law (in *Matt.*, hom. xvi, 2, 3; P.G., LVII, 240–2).

replied : ' Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.' Such a temptation He ever repelled. His miracle-working power would be used to cure, to raise from the dead, to console ; but never to serve either His own or His followers' natural needs. At the very beginning of His ministry He appeared at Jacob's well, overcome by thirst and fatigue ; here it is His disciples upon whom hunger presses. So will it be to the end, and the law that He Himself laid down will be respected by His followers in every age. The greatest wonder-workers of Christian history will suffer from hunger and disease ; and if S. Paul, whose hands had healed so many sick, asked once for special succour for himself, he was met with the reply : ' My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity.'

The struggle between our Lord and His enemies was exacerbated by one more Sabbath incident. On entering the synagogue our Lord's glance fell on a man with a withered hand (Mark iii, 1–6). Here again, it is difficult to fix the time and place. In the narrative of the first two evangelists the incident is so closely connected with that preceding that it might well be assigned to the same day, had not S. Luke (vi, 6) expressly said that it took place on another Sabbath. None of the evangelists mentions what synagogue it was ; we may guess Capharnaum, but it is no more than a guess. Our Lord's enemies ' the scribes and Pharisees ' were there ; they had come to spy on Him and according to Matthew (xii, 10) they took the initiative with the question : ' Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days ? ' They saw the sick man present, and wanted to forestall our Lord's action or make Him fall into their snare.[1]

S. Mark describes the scene with a detail that compels interest. At a word from Christ the afflicted man came forward to where, before him, next to our Lord Himself, who had just read and commented on the Scriptures, sat the scribes and Pharisees in the places of honour ; behind were the people, and all eyes were fixed on him and on our Lord Himself. Then Jesus turning to the Pharisees who surrounded Him on all sides, tried to arouse within them

[1] S. Jerome writes, commenting on S. Matthew xii, 13 : ' In evangelio quo utuntur Nazareni et Ebionitæ . . . homo iste qui aridam habet manum cæmentarius describitur, istius modi vocibus auxilium precans : Cæmentarius eram, manibus victum quæritans ; precor te, Jesu, ut mihi restituas sanitatem, ne turpiter mendicem cibos.'

some sentiment of justice and good faith. S. Matthew records His question : ' What man shall there be among you that hath one sheep : and if the same fall into a pit on the Sabbath Day, will he not take hold on it and lift it up ? How much better is a man than a sheep ? '

This argument—which is related by Luke in another context—(xiv, 5) made its appeal to good sense, and should certainly have been appreciated by our Lord's opponents, who were ruled by self-interest and cared more for their cattle than for their neighbour.[1] However, our Lord did not stop there, but at once placed the discussion on more general ground : ' Therefore it is lawful to do a good deed on the sabbath days ' (Matt. xii, 12), or, in the words of the two other evangelists : ' Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days or to do evil ? To save life or to destroy ? ' Then He places the great principle of the love of our neighbour in the clearest light ; no positive law can forbid us to save the life of a man. This principle is too evident for even the Pharisees to deny it, but they dared not recognize it either, for they dreaded its application too much ; so, faithful to their usual tactics in such cases, they said nothing at all. Such manifest bad faith filled our Lord with righteous indignation, a detail the very mention of which shows once again the vivid impression left on the evangelist's mind by the whole scene : '. . . Looking round about on them with anger, being grieved for the blindness of their hearts, He said to the man : Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth ; and his hand was restored unto him ' (Mark iii, 5).

Thus the miracle was accomplished by a word, so that the Pharisees had not even a pretext for criticism. In their casuistry all surgical operations were forbidden on the Sabbath ; and if Christ had so much as touched the sick man, as in such cases He often did, they might, strictly speaking, have brought an accusation against Him ; but

[1] Certain Jews, in our Lord's time, were more severe than the Pharisees to whom Christ was speaking. Thus we read in the Sadocite Code : ' If a beast falls into a well or a ditch, he must not be pulled out on the sabbath day ' ; and even : ' If a human creature falls into the water . . . it is forbidden to help him to regain dry land by means of a ladder, instrument or cord ' (*Un écrit sadducéen*, tr. by Israël Levi. *Revue des Etudes juives*, lxi (1911), p. 198). Charles, in his note on this passage (n. 23, p. 827), compares Schabb. 128*b*, quoting R. Judah : ' If an animal falls into a well, it may be fed ; and mattresses or cushions may be put underneath it in order that it may raise itself and by its own effort escape from the well.' On this passage cp. Billerbeck, I, 629.

what could be said against a simple word, or how could that be looked upon as a violation of the Sabbath Day?

Opponents who were in good faith would have been disarmed by such prudent precautions; but on Christ's enemies they had only an exasperating effect. '. . . the Pharisees going out, immediately made a consultation with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.' No doubt these Herodians were men attached to the court of Herod Antipas, whom the Pharisees were willing to use in order to arouse the suspicions of the prince against the growing influence of our Lord. They hoped to make him fear a popular movement and so to lead him to persecute our Lord, as he had done to John the Baptist before Him.

These various incidents, brought together by S. Mark, show the gradual growth, both of the hatred of the Pharisees for our Lord, and their boldness in carrying it into effect. At first, at the cure of the paralytic, they looked on with anxiety and jealousy, but said nothing. At Matthew's feast they went a step further, questioning the Apostles, but not daring directly to approach our Lord. When the question of fasting arose, they did so, but took care to have John's disciples with them and, so to speak, to push them in front; later, when they tried to pick a quarrel about the plucking of the corn by the disciples, they did the questioning themselves, and did so directly to the point, but as yet with apparent moderation. But at last in the synagogue they provoked the incident themselves and, the miracle once worked, could contain themselves no longer and set about finding accomplices to bring about our Lord's death. With great delicacy of touch S. Chrysostom has laid his finger upon the real cause of their exasperation. When it was only a question of plucked ears of corn they were driven to argument; but they are beside themselves when they see a man restored to health. It is only the first act of the blood-stained tragedy that is to follow; the first step in the long intrigue; but we can already see what was the tendency of events, and divine what the issue was to be.[1]

[1] By way of understanding better the significance of these first conflicts, it will not be amiss to try in a few words to make clear what the respective positions of the Pharisees and the 'people of the country' (*am-ha-arez*) really was. This is thus described by S. Bialoblotzki in the *Encyclopædia Judaica*, II (1928), art. *Am-ha-arez*, col. 537–41: 'The opposition of the Galilean populace was mainly directed against the tendencies of pharisaic legalism, which aimed at establishing an absolute separation between Jews and non-Jews; whereas in Galilee many non-Jews were established

Further, in all these incidents we learn to know our Blessed Lord Himself.

From the beginning He manifested His own clear consciousness of His nature and mission. This He did prudently and with restraint, and without being unnecessarily provocative but quite strongly. So, when at the healing of the paralytic someone objects that God only can forgive sins : ' The Son of Man,' He replies, ' hath power so to do,' and proceeds to prove His words. At the feast of the publicans He remarks : ' I am not come to call the just, but sinners.' When the question of fasting is being discussed, He asks : ' Can the children of the bridegroom fast, as long as the bridegroom is with them ? ' These are but hints, it is true, but set the mind in motion and open the way to fuller knowledge later on. Who is this Son of Man, and whence His supernatural power ? What is this coming of which He speaks, and whence comes He ? How is He the bridegroom, and what is the meaning of this title which John gave Him and He claims for Himself ? Once again, and these are His words about the Sabbath : '. . . the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath also.' Whence has He so great a power ? All these statements of His, supported by the miracles He

with whom the local population was in perpetual touch. The legal prescription which imposed the washing of hands also met with opposition, as we see from Mark vii, 15. Those who were particular about religious observances grouped themselves in associations, a step which was resented by the " people of the country " as a declaration of war ; since from that time forward the isolation maintained by the Pharisees in relation to them was of a social rather than a personal kind. . . . Even the methods of controversy of the Pharisees were exasperating, for while they considered the Sadducees as adversaries who were at least their equal, they despised the " people of the country " and looked on them as an inferior class. This spirit of isolation separating the educated from the common people plunged these into a state of the most complete ignorance. Later, the educated classes saw that they had gone too far.'

' This separation,' says Rabbi Eliezer, ' did much to strengthen the new sect of Christians. With them the " people of the country " found love and a warm welcome, while they met with nothing but the most brutal rebuffs at the hands of the educated Jews. Christianity did not exact from its followers the same fidelity to the Law as did the Pharisees, and it was careful to take into account the conditions of life of the Galilean populace. Still, only a part of the *Am-ha-arez* gave their adhesion to the Christian faith, but the hatred of the educated classes among them was to be found on every side. Rabbi Akiba himself confesses that when he was one of the people he was ready to bite one of these *literati* like an ass would, so as not to leave a whole bone in his body . . . (Pesachim, 49b). On their side the hatred of the educated classes for the *am-ha-arez* was so great that there was a saying among them that when it was a question of knifing one of these canaille it might be done on the Day of Atonement and even when that fell on the Sabbath Day.'

worked, must inevitably have impressed souls of good-will, but what vistas of religious enlightenment must they have opened up! There was need of great loyalty and sublime courage for our Lord's hearers to set out on a path which would lead them so high and so far; but these mysterious utterances urged them forward, drawn also by the Father, as He revealed to them His Son.

Not less remarkable is the teaching of Christ about the law. Here again, from the first day of His public ministry He appears clearly conscious of the end to be attained. Positive precepts, however holy, are only enacted for man's sake, and in case of necessity cannot bind. Above all, they can never take precedence of the supreme law of charity. Thus already the liberty of the Gospel is affirmed. But at the same time, so different does this new law appear from the old that none grasp or savour it unless they be born again; at the infusion of the new wine, too generous in its strength, the old bottles will inevitably burst. There are mere glimpses, revealing for a moment the new dispensation that Jesus was to found. Soon He will explain it more fully to His disciples, together with His incomparable sanctity and His as yet unsuspected demands, but at the same time the infinite sweetness that accompanies them and the eternal happiness with which they are crowned.

VII. The choosing of the Twelve.

For some months now, Jesus had been multiplying His preaching and miracles. A few disciples had followed Him closely and persistently, and the hearts of many others had been touched and their minds enlightened by His words and deeds. And now it was time to group these, as yet scattered, elements in order that their permanence and cohesion might be secured. Moreover, the hostile movements that had begun already were a warning; the future looked threatening and there were premonitory shadows of 'the night when no man can work': so while it was yet day it was necessary to complete the work already begun. And then, if Christ came to free the people from the intolerable burdens that the Pharisees had laid upon them, He certainly did *not* intend to relieve them of the service of Almighty God. It was therefore a necessary and pressing task to promulgate

the law of the kingdom and to set before His disciples the light but sacred yoke of Christ that they were to bear.

> 'And going up into a mountain, He called unto Him whom He would Himself: and they came to Him. And He made that twelve should be with Him, and that He might send them to preach. And He gave them power to heal sickness, and to cast out devils.' (Mark iii, 13–15.)

From this solemn passage there emerges clearly the importance of the event described; and this is further emphasized by our Lord's retirement to the mountains 'to pass the whole night in the prayer of God' (Luke vi, 12). For truly He was at the eve of a decisive choice, and of a step on which His whole work would depend. So He would pray, asking light, strength, and perpetual succour for His Apostles and His Church.

And 'when day was come' He called to Him those whom He had chosen. He seems to have been alone on the mountain, as His custom was when He wished to pray; now He was rejoined by one or other of His more intimate disciples, and these He commissioned to call the rest. If we follow S. Luke, it would seem that He sent for all His disciples in this way, or at least for those who followed Him as a rule, and that when they were assembled He chose from among them the inner circle of the twelve. Mark insists on the free initiative of our Lord's choice: 'He called unto Him whom He would Himself;' and this our Lord Himself would recall later on: 'You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you' (John xv, 16. Cp. vi, 70; xiii, 18; Acts i, 2). And when, in the first days of the Church's life, it was desired to fill the place left open by the treason and death of Judas, neither the Apostles nor the disciples as a whole dared to take it upon themselves to elect a new Apostle. All they ventured to do was to choose two candidates and offer them to the Lord that He might make His choice (Acts i, 24–26). In the same way, if S. Paul was an Apostle it was because he had been chosen by Christ Himself: 'Paul, an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead' (Gal. i, 1).

The incident of Matthias' election which we have just recalled stresses an important point: Jesus had chosen twelve Apostles, and this number, reduced by Judas' treachery, had to be restored. S. Mark's narrative has already

shown the importance attached to the number twelve in this connection by Christ Himself: in two places he tells us: 'He appointed twelve.' And in this fact there is an evident meaning. At a later time when Peter asked our Lord what reward He had reserved for His Apostles, He replied: 'When the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of His majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (Matt. xix, 28). This glorious enthronement will be the crowning of their apostolate; but before they reach such a reward, and before this judgement of the twelve tribes, they must work at the task of evangelizing the same twelve tribes of the chosen race. The number twelve is therefore symbolic of the order in which the Gospel was to be spread; the Apostles being sent first to Israel—to all Israel; while it would be only later that, to the elect from among the twelve tribes, would be added that great multitude of every race and people so amazingly described in the Apocalypse of S. John.

Those thus chosen were often called the Twelve; sometimes 'Apostles'—the title given them by Christ Himself: 'twelve of them, whom also He named Apostles,' writes S. Luke (vi, 13) in the narrative we have transcribed above.[1]

This title of Apostle has a perfectly clear meaning, fixed by our Lord Himself. We remember the words He addressed to His Father on the last day of His life: 'As Thou hast sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world' (John xvii, 18); and after His Resurrection: 'As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you' (xx, 21). Thus the mission of the Apostles is to be a delegation of that of our Lord Himself. They will be in the world as His representatives, as He Himself is the representative of His Father—an analogy in itself sufficient to mark the infinite greatness of such a vocation: all the riches of heaven; revela-

[1] This term is rarely used in the Gospel; John employing it only once (xiii, 16) and then in the etymological sense of one sent; Matthew once: 'The names of the twelve Apostles are these' (x, 2); Mark twice (iii, 14; vi, 30) in his account of the first call and mission of the twelve. Luke uses it in the two parallel passages of his Gospel (vi, 13; ix, 10), once perhaps in the sense of one sent (xi, 49) and three times in the technical sense of Apostles (xvii, 5; xxii, 14; xxiv, 10). Cp. Batiffol, *Eglise naissante*, p. 61. It appears, then, that it is only in S. Luke that the word seems to be in current use; in which fact we may perhaps see a reflection of the usage of the primitive Church, as known to S. Luke and followed by him in the Acts. In the Gospels the Apostles are most often called 'the disciples' or 'the twelve.' On the 'Apostles' and 'the twelve' cp. Médebielle, art. *Apostolat*, suppl. *Dictionnaire biblique*, col. 544–9.

tion, grace, eternal life, which have been put by the Father into the hands of His Son, being handed on to the Apostles by that Son Himself. And from this, too, we can gather the nature of the society He was going to found. It was to be no scattered crowd of individuals, breathing the same spirit, it is true, but making their heavenly journey in isolation and independence of each other; but a hierarchical society, taught and governed by shepherds who are delegates of Christ, as He Himself was of His Father. And just as the mediation of the Son is indispensable and no one can approach the Father but through Him, so also is the ministry of the Apostles and their successors, and none can be united to Christ, save through them.

The institution of the apostolate was then a decisive step in our Lord's work on earth; bearing the stamp of His Divine workmanship all the more clearly because it was new, and due to His initiative alone.

The old prophets had gathered disciples around them, as had John the Baptist, too, but in neither case had the followers been endowed with authority or delegated powers, for neither the prophets nor our Lord's Precursor had any such powers to pass on to their successors. Theirs was a ministry of preaching and preparation, temporary in character and only designed to prepare the way for someone else. But Jesus was definitely the One sent, having within Himself the fulness of truth and grace. But since He passed but briefly through this world, He had to pass on to others this sacred trust. No doubt, even after His Ascension, He would continue to dispense His treasures, but mediately, through the ministry of those whom He had chosen and trained.

The list of the twelve, which occurs four times in the New Testament (Matt. x, 2–4; Mark iii, 16–19; Luke vi, 14–16; Acts i, 13) falls into three series of four Apostles. In each the first name is the same, and so are the others, but in varying order. Judas Iscariot is the last of the last series, as Simon Peter is always the first of the first. The following is S. Matthew's list: Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon, Judas Iscariot.

The story of the call of the first seven Apostles is already known to us; of that of the remaining five, the Gospels give no details, and it is possible that the collective call recorded

above was the first that they received. We have very little personal information about any of them, more especially if we do not wish to take apocryphal traditions into account.

Peter is the best known of all and, as we have seen, he is at the head of all the lists, while Matthew says in so many words : 'The first Simon, who is called Peter. . . .' Nor is this merely a question of formal precedence ; it is the recognition of a fact. It was Peter who acted as head of the Apostolic College, on all occasions of a decisive kind. After our Lord's discourse on the Holy Eucharist (John vi) when many for whom this 'hard saying' had been too much were leaving Jesus on every hand, and our Blessed Lord had asked the twelve : 'Will you also go away ?' it was Peter who replied in the name of all who remained faithful : 'Lord, to whom shall we go : Thou hast the words of eternal life.' And at Cæsarea Philippi, when Christ, after having asked His disciples : 'Whom do men say that the Son of Man is,' goes on to enquire : 'whom do you say that I am,' it was Peter, once more, who answered : 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God.'

For this primacy, which he had then begun to exercise, Almighty God had prepared him by the graces of his supernatural vocation, but also by his natural gifts : simple, straightforward, impetuous, he had given himself to Jesus with all the fervour that he possessed. Seeing Him walking upon the waters, he cried : 'Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters,' and then after the first steps, hesitated and began to sink. And in this incident he revealed his entire self—impulsive, but still weak, endowed less with constancy than with zeal. But at least he was wholly devoted to his Master, eagerly drinking in His teaching, asking, without a trace of false pride : 'Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him ? Till seven times ?' Even the presence of Moses and Elias at the Transfiguration does not prevent him from looking high, as his custom was : 'Lord, it is good for us to be here : if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles. . . .' 'He knew not what he said,' says the evangelist, and it was too true, but Jesus was indulgent to such confident and spontaneous devotion as this. For the rest, although still narrowed and fettered by his Jewish training, he was a docile pupil of his Lord. Thus at the Last Supper, when Jesus wished to wash his feet, while at first he protests : 'Thou

shalt never wash my feet,' yet when our Lord replies : ' If I wash thee not thou shalt have no part with Me,' he replies with equal zeal : ' Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.' Only on one point is his docility at fault, inasmuch as he could not bring himself to entertain the thought of his Master's Passion. Scarcely had he made his glorious confession at Cæsarea Philippi than, unable to support our Lord's prediction of His own death, he tried to break His resolution and merited in return the severe rebuke : ' Go behind me, Satan : for thou art a scandal unto Me, because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.' And on the last day when Jesus said to His disciples : ' Whither I go you cannot come,' with his usual impetuosity Peter replies : ' Lord, whither goest Thou? . . . Why cannot I follow Thee now?' And all through that last dread evening our Lord heaped warning upon warning, but Peter would have none of it. He saw at last, indeed, that the danger was great, but would never admit that he, Peter, would give way before it. ' I will lay down my life for Thee.' ' Although all shall be scandalized in Thee, I will never be scandalized. Yea, though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee.'

No doubt all these protests were presumptuous to a degree, being in direct opposition to the grave and formal warnings of our Lord ; and the event was to him disillusion of the most cruel kind ; yet they are at least sincere. So great was the warmth of love in Peter's heart, that the possibility of defection never seriously crossed his mind : he was soon to learn that the spirit is willing but the flesh weak. In the garden, on a last impulse of impetuous zeal, he drew his sword and wounded Malchus, the servant of the high priest. Then he saw his Master dragged away : it was a mortal blow for him. That Master was his one support : when that went, his fall was swift. But after that terrible fall he was restored by one look from his Divine Lord. On the first Easter morning, with John, his faithful companion, he ran to the tomb which they both saw to be empty, and returned. Then Jesus appeared to Peter ; a fact which the Gospels record almost in a single word. ' He has appeared to Simon.' Our Lord's other appearances after His Resurrection were meant to enlighten the whole Church ; but this one, it would seem, had no other purpose but to comfort Peter, assuring him of pardon, adding joy to his zeal, which was

from henceforth to be buoyed up by a force unconquerable and divine. In the last chapter of S. John's Gospel we shall find him once more as we knew him before the Passion, leaping from his boat into the water to be as quickly as possible at Jesus' side. But no longer is this impulsive love marred by presumption ; his last reply to our Lord's triple question is fervent, as always, but at the same time humble and restrained. 'Lord, Thou knowest all things : Thou knowest that I love Thee.'

In this last reunion Peter appears in close union with John. If Peter threw himself into the water, it was because John had recognized our Lord and had told his friend ; they were together with Jesus and when, after the meal, Christ told Peter of the glorious martyrdom he was to undergo, the Apostle did not hesitate to ask : 'Lord, and what shall this man do ?' The close friendship revealed by this incident was formed by our Lord Himself ; when He sent His Apostles out to preach the Gospel, He sent them two by two, and we cannot doubt that the companion He gave to Peter was John. For we see the two Apostles sent by Jesus to prepare the Passover (Luke xxii, 8) ; together they followed Him out of the garden (John xviii, 15) ; and together they ran to the tomb on the morning of the first Easter Day (John xx, 3). The Acts shows them in constant association ; in the miracle in the Temple (iii, 1–4, 19) and the mission to Samaria (viii, 14). So in this work as fishers of men the old association in the days when they worked in partnership on the Lake of Galilee is sanctified and transformed.

Besides his close connection with the Prince of the Apostles, S. John was to become, by a special title, the friend and confidant of our Lord. He was 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' and we see him at the Last Supper resting his head on Jesus' breast. Quite possibly they were already related by birth ;[1] and, if so, it would have been among His relations and their friends that our Lord's first conquests were made. Further, through his mother, John would have been related to John the Baptist in the same way

[1] We read in his Gospel : 'Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother and His mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas and Mary Magdalen' (xix, 25). Quite probably the sister of Mary here mentioned may be identified with Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee, whose presence at the foot of the Cross is recorded by Matthew (xxvii, 55) and Mark (xv, 40). Cp. *supra*, p. 35. If this be so we could understand better how in dying Jesus confided His Blessed Mother to John's care.

as our Lord. No doubt these are only theories, but they are not without interest in the story of the first beginnings of the Gospel ministry.

It is at least certain that, like Peter, John at first earned his living as a fisherman on the Lake of Galilee. Later on, when after their first miracle they were brought before the Sanhedrin, the judges were astonished at their boldness, knowing that they were ' illiterate and ignorant men ' (Acts iv, 13).

None the less, a considerable degree of comfort reigned in Zebedee's home. Hired servants worked there and remained with the father after the call of his two sons. Moreover, their mother Salome was one of the holy women who followed Jesus, ministered to His need (Mark xv, 41. Cp. Luke viii, 2, 3), and after His death brought spices to embalm His Body (Luke xxiii, 56). From these last facts we can see that John had in his mother a pattern of love and devotion to our Blessed Lord. But besides all this, the personal qualities of the Beloved Disciple stand out clearly on the Gospel page. Jesus had called the two brothers ' Sons of thunder ' (Mark iii, 17), and, as a matter of fact, they both come before us full of impetuosity and zeal. This was often ill-informed and deliberately narrow and exclusive in spirit. It was John who came to Jesus one day and told Him : ' Master, we saw a certain man casting out devils in Thy name : and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us ' (Luke ix, 49) ; and it was both the brothers who, seeing that the inhabitants of a certain Samaritan village had closed their doors upon our Lord, asked : ' Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them ? ' (Luke ix, 54). We recognize the same narrow spirit in a more objectionable form in the action of their mother when she came to Jesus with her two sons, with the request that in His kingdom they might sit on His right hand and on His left. ' You know not what you ask,' replied our Lord. ' Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink ? They say to Him : We can. He saith to them : My chalice indeed you shall drink ; but to sit on My right or left hand is not Mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father ' (Matt. xx, 20–24). But through all these pettinesses we feel the presence of John's sincere love ; and our Blessed Lord made no mistake. John would drink His chalice. Besides, Christ had a special

love for this soul, so imperfect, as yet, but withal so generous. At the Last Supper Peter and John sat on the same couch as Jesus on either side, while John, leaning on our Lord's breast, learned the secrets of His Sacred Heart. He follows Him to Caiphas' presence and to Calvary itself; alone, of all the Apostles, he is at the foot of the Cross, and it is he who receives from our Lord His holy Mother, the most precious treasure He has to give. Later, in his writings, and especially in his Gospel, he will confide to the Church some of the intimate revelations he has received; yet we can still recognize the Son of Thunder in this disciple whom Jesus loved. He it is who, in the Apocalypse, echoes the loud voice of the martyrs: 'How long, O Lord (Holy and True), dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?' (Apoc. vi, 10); it is he also who cannot suffer the false prophets who pervert the doctrine of Christ: 'Receive him not into the house nor say to him: God speed you' (2 John 10).

In these two examples we can see what our Lord required before all else in His Apostles. His choice did not fall on men of learning or high rank, but rather among those who were sound of heart, capable of devotion, simple and docile in spirit. Such were the twelve privileged ones, as we see them in the Gospel; and the rest, too, so far as our knowledge of them extends.

It was Andrew's special glory to have been the first called by Christ and to have brought to Him his brother Peter as well.

The part he plays in the Gospel story does not, by a long way, approach that of Simon; none the less, with Simon himself and the two sons of Zebedee, he formed an inner group for whose ears our Lord reserved certain secrets, as, for example, concerning His Parousia and the judgement to come (Mark xiii, 3). On two occasions we find him by Philip's side. One was at the multiplication of the loaves when Philip, finding the situation beyond him, could only reply to our Lord's question as to supplies: 'Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little.' Thus it was that Andrew intervened with the remark: 'There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes; but what are they among so many?' (John vi, 7–9). And later on, at our Lord's entry into Jerusalem, when the Greeks sought out Philip with the request: 'Sir, we would see Jesus,' Philip, once more in

difficulties, had recourse to Andrew, and together they reported the occurrence to our Lord. In these two incidents Andrew appears as the practical man of sound judgement, the natural resource of his friend Philip, sooner in difficulties and apparently more timid in character. It is related by the author of the Muratorian Canon that when it was a question as to whether S. John should write his Gospel, and the other disciples came to implore him to do so, John replied : ' Let us fast together for three days, and whosoever among us has a revelation shall enlighten the others.' The next night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the twelve, that John ought to write the Gospel in his own name, and that it should be revised by all the rest. An old legend which, no doubt, is not to be taken just as it stands ; but we are delighted to find thus associated at the end of their lives the two Apostles who, long ago, had followed S. John the Baptist, and had been exhorted by him to follow Christ.

The fourth member of this group of the inner circle of our Lord's disciples is James, the brother of John. Like John himself, and their mother Salome, he is not named in the Fourth Gospel ; but we read (xxi, 2) of ' the son of Zebedee,' this being the only place in that Gospel where Zebedee himself is named. He would seem to have been the elder of the two, since, when the two brothers are mentioned together, James is always put first (except in Luke ix, 28), and on two occasions (Mark v, 37 ; Matt. xvii, 1) John is referred to as the brother of James ; it is never the other way round. Like his brother he is called Son of Thunder : like him he would call down fire on the inhospitable Samaritans ; like him also he claims the first place in the kingdom. Moreover, Jesus treats him as one of the privileged ones among His disciples ; with Peter, Andrew and John he is present at the cure of Peter's mother-in-law (Mark i, 29) ; with the same three he forms the chosen audience of the eschatological prophecies of our Lord (Mark xiii, 3) ; with Peter and John he witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mark v, 37) ; the Transfiguration (Mark ix, 1), and the Agony in the Garden (Mark xiv, 33). He had promised Christ that he would drink His chalice, and he kept his word : first among the Apostles to suffer martyrdom, he was put to death by Herod Agrippa fourteen years after the Passion of our Lord (Acts xii, 2). Shortly after, the royal persecutor was suddenly struck by a terrible

disease, in the midst of his inordinate luxury and insolent success (Acts xii, 21 ; Josephus, A.J., XIX, viii, 2, 343–352).

Of the other Apostles we know little enough. About S. Philip, John has told a few facts : how eagerly he responded to our Lord's call ; and how immediately after, he wins over his friend Nathanael, even before he knew our Lord—whom he called Joseph's son—particularly well. We find him doubting a little in the crisis that led to the feeding of the five thousand ; and our Lord questions him in order to call forth an act of faith (John vi, 6), obtaining only a confession of powerlessness in reply. Later, at the time of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem, we find him besought by the Greeks to present them to Jesus, and not daring to do so on his own authority alone. During the Last Supper he shows once more his goodwill and equally his lack of understanding of heavenly mysteries. ' Lord,' said he, ' show us the Father and it is enough for us,' revealing the fact that he was still looking for a theophany of the kind with which the Jewish apocalyptic literature is full. And our Lord, deeply moved, answered sadly : ' Have I been so long a time with you and have you not known Me, Philip ? He that seeth Me seeth the Father also. How sayest thou : show us the Father ? ' (John xiv, 8, 9). This is the last time that Philip appears in the Gospel story.[1]

What we know about S. Thomas is gathered from S. John's Gospel too. He figures in the last weeks of the narrative, where he plays a secondary but revealing part. When our Lord, having heard of Lazarus' illness, desired to return to Judea ; to the other Apostles, fearful of the dangers that threatened our Lord, Thomas exclaimed : ' Let us also go that we may die with Him ' (John xi, 16). It is impossible not to feel the profound attachment to our Lord's person revealed by his words ; but, at the same time, they are almost a cry of despair. And it is in the same light that he appears in the other event in which he played a part ; always faithful and devoted, but without the strength of character that issues in hope. After the Last Supper when Jesus told His Apostles : ' Whither I go you know : and the way you know,' Thomas broke in with the question : ' Lord, we know not whither Thou goest. And how can we

[1] According to Polycrates of Ephesus, quoted by Eusebius (H.E., iii, 31), he went to Hierapolis and died there. Two of his daughters lived there in the state of virginity until the second century ; another married, settled at Ephesus and died there. Cp. Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 45–7.

know the way?' And Jesus answers: 'I am the Way and the Truth and the Life' (xiv, 4–6). After our Lord's death S. Thomas' discouragement was complete. When the other disciples told him that in his absence they had seen the Lord, he replied almost rudely: 'Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails and put my fingers into the place of the nails, and put my hands into His side, I will not believe' (xx, 25). Eight days later, Jesus appeared again and fulfilled to the letter the condition, so inconsiderately imposed, and Thomas in a transport alike of confusion and joy cried: 'My Lord and my God.' This, the most explicit confession of faith in Christ to be found in all the Gospels, is reserved for the most incredulous of all the Apostles, so that once more we see our Lord turning to His own glory and our instruction the weakness of a heart sincere and devoted all the same. At the Last Supper it was his despondent questioning that called forth one of the sublimest declarations of Christ, and now his unwillingness to believe leads him to one of the noblest imaginable professions of faith, grounded on proof of the most unquestionable kind. A little later we find Peter taking Thomas fishing with Nathanael, the two sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples as well (xxi, 2).

We know just a little of two other Apostles, Matthew and Bartholomew, from the circumstances of their call by our Lord. One, the publican of Capharnaum, who at Christ's word left all and followed Him; the other, the 'Israelite indeed,' in whom there was 'no guile,' whom Jesus won over to Himself by recalling to him the scene under the fig tree. To these two incidents the Gospel adds nothing at all.

From these materials, scanty as they are, we learn something of the Apostles of the first two groups. Of the four remaining ones, James, the son of Alphaeus, Simon Zelotes, Judas, also called Thaddaeus or Lebbaeus, and Judas Iscariot, we know scarcely more than the names;[1] only the

[1] It is a much controverted question whether James, the son of Alphaeus, is James the Lord's brother who afterwards presided over the Church in Jerusalem. On the affirmative side may be quoted Gal. i, 19, and the Gospel of the Nazarenes quoted by S. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, 2. In the contrary sense the unbelief of the Lord's brethren is alleged: John vii, 5; cp. Mark iii, 16–19. Tillemont remarks that the Greeks distinguish these two James', their liturgy having two separate feasts and sets of lessons; the Latins, for the most part, follow S. Jerome. On the side of the identification of the two, see Lagrange, *S. Marc*, pp. 84–5; Chaine, *L'Épître de Saint Jacques* (Paris, 1927), p. xxix. On the other side, Malvy, *R.S.R.* (1918), pp. 122–32; Mader, *Biblische Zeitschrift*, VI, iv, pp. 393–406.

last, Judas, is known, sadly, not as an Apostle, but as the traitor who delivered Jesus up to death.

In bringing this sketch to a close, if we take the twelve Apostles altogether, we shall find that, so far as we know, they were all drawn from the same social circle. The first four were fishers of the Lake ; and the same is true of Thomas, Nathanael, and of two more who in the last chapter of S. John's Gospel we find associated as fishermen with S. Peter. Matthew was a collector of taxes ; while we know nothing really of the antecedents of the rest, except that we gather from all the evidence that in this society, formed and trained by Christ, there was no distinction of fortune, education or knowledge. All were called by Him to a rough life of toil, and so it had been His will that they should be prepared. He required of them entire devotion and utter surrender to Himself and to His Father in heaven ; and He found these dispositions most easily among simple folk of a humble walk in life. The story of the rich young man (Matt. xix, 16–30) is a sad confirmation of the wisdom of such a choice. Still more anxious was He to find in His disciples the docility and simplicity of children (Matt. xviii, 3), and it would have been much more difficult for Him to form by His teaching such Masters in Israel as Nicodemus. Finally, this choice of weak and ignorant instruments was bound to throw into relief the strength and wisdom of God, that 'He that glorieth may glory in the Lord' (1 Cor. i, 26–31).

The Apostles thus chosen were to be trained little by little to their new vocation by a new life. In the course of this history we shall be able to follow this slow and patient process of formation, which stands out most conspicuously in the Gospel narrative in connection with the second part of the Galilean ministry. As the great mass of the people, worked on by our Lord's enemies, gradually ceased to form the docile and confiding audience of earlier days, we shall find the Master concentrating more and more on the little band of Apostles. To them He will confide the seed, that later, when the graces of the Passion have been released, they will scatter throughout the world.

CHAPTER V

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

I. The Sermon. Its Significance and Interpretation.

IMMEDIATELY after having related the choice and call of the twelve Apostles S. Luke records the Sermon on the Mount (vi, 20); while S. Matthew who, in any case, does not describe the call of the Apostles, places the Sermon at the beginning of the Galilean ministry of our Blessed Lord (v, 1). It would seem as if Matthew adopted this arrangement in order to set forth our Lord's whole plan from the very start; while Luke seems to follow more closely the real order of events. For it can scarcely be doubted that Jesus did not, thus fully, unfold the whole of His law and promises on the first day of His ministry. Preparation would have been needed, and this was provided by the discourses in the synagogues, by our Lord's miracles, and instructions given on many occasions by the way.

This decisive step is closely connected with the establishment of the Apostolic College and completed what was then begun. In choosing His Apostles our Lord secured the permanence of His work; and it was then time to set forth the doctrine that these ambassadors of His were to assimilate and later on to preach. They were in the first rank of His followers, and it was to them in the first place that our Lord spoke. But He had other hearers: the crowd was there: 'a very great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the sea coast, both of Tyre and Sidon.' All these people were 'come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases': 'and all the multitude sought to touch Him: for virtue went out from Him and healed all.' In this short account we see clearly what it was that attracted the crowds; first, no doubt, our Lord's miraculous power; but also His teaching. The sick were suffering and eager to be cured; but also the multitude were disconsolate, as 'sheep' without a shepherd: and they too were eager,

but to be taught. Those were the dispositions for which our Lord had been waiting and which He required.

In borrowing S. Luke's account of what took place, we have taken it for granted that it is the same sermon that is reproduced by Luke (vi) and Matthew (v), and, in fact, there seems no doubt that this is the case. 'Both Gospels assign the Sermon to the earlier ministry of Christ. The circumstances of the discourse are similar—the mountain, the representative multitude, the healings, the address to the disciples. The theme of the discourse is the same in each—the true righteousness. The development of the theme is similar—a characterization of this righteousness, with specific teaching as to how it is to affect thought and conduct, and an exhortation to men to live in this way. Each account begins with the Beatitudes, and closes with the injunction to do God's will as revealed in Jesus' teaching, enforced by the parable of the two house-builders. And, finally, nearly the whole of Luke's discourse is contained in Matthew.'[1] All the same there are differences, some of which we have noticed already. S. Matthew begins his account: 'And seeing the multitudes He went up into a mountain. And when He was set down, His disciples came to Him. And opening His mouth, He taught them, saying . . .' While Luke: 'And coming down with them He stood in a plain place: and the company of His disciples and a very great multitude of people . . . And He, lifting up His eyes on His disciples, said . . .' The difference is obvious, but it is of no great consequence. We may easily suppose that, having first ascended the mountain, Jesus then came half-way down again on to one of those grassy terraces that are so numerous on the sides of the Galilean hills. An analysis of the Sermon itself will reveal greater apparent discrepancies than this, but none great enough to override the reasons given above, which seem definitely to establish the fact that the two sermons are one and the same.

With still more confidence may we reject the theory of some critics, who would see in the Sermon on the Mount merely an artificial creation of the evangelists and not a discourse actually pronounced by our Blessed Lord. In support of this view we are reminded that S. Matthew often artificially groups together miracles, parables, and aphorisms,

[1] Votaw, art. *Sermon on the Mount*, Dictionary of the Bible, V, p. 3.

and that in this case especially we find a number of ideas that do not seem to be in their proper place, and which Luke inserts elsewhere. For example, the teaching of the *Our Father* to the disciples, recorded by Matthew as part of the Sermon on the Mount (vi, 9), is placed in quite a different context by S. Luke (xi, 2–4).

This is true enough, but does not justify those conclusions which the advocates of this theory seek to draw. It is quite possible that around the Sermon on the Mount S. Matthew has grouped aphorisms spoken at another time ; but for that reason to reduce the whole discourse to nothing but an artificial conglomeration would be a *tour de force* with which we can have no part. We know from other sources (Mark iv, 1–35 ; vi, 34) that our Lord was accustomed to use the gatherings of the people in quiet spots to teach them more at length. It is one of these sermons of His that is before us here, clearly bearing the Master's touch, not only in the quality of its matter, but in its unity of composition as well. We are under no illusion that we have anything like a short-hand report. S. Matthew's account of the Sermon is the most complete, and even then if read at one sitting it would scarcely last twenty minutes. It seems obvious that our Lord could not have condensed into such a compass all He had to say on subjects so vast and so important as those of which He treats, and we must conclude that the Gospel has preserved the salient points of the Sermon, without reproducing its full development by our Lord. And, conversely, as we have already said, S. Matthew has attached to that discourse aphorisms uttered on other occasions. These, careful reading and especially a comparison with S. Luke will generally enable us to recognize and detach.[1]

But research of this kind must not make us lose sight of what is essential and, at the same time, closely in accordance with the text ; we mean, the religious significance of this Sermon of our Lord. On this Reuss has written : ' It contains an incomparable treasure of wisdom and moral teaching, based on spiritual truth, and has in all ages been justly regarded as the pearl of all the discourses that the Gospels record. There is not a line nor a word that does not bear the stamp of originality and absolute truth, as well as of an unrivalled sublimity of conception and a spirit admirable in every respect. If we can ever say that tradition, which

[1] Cp. E. Levesque, *Nos quatre évangiles*, pp. 279 ff.

has preserved the memories of our Lord's brief sojourn upon earth, carries in itself its own certitude and proof of its own fidelity, we can say it here. There is not a single sentence which has not become a maxim and a proverb in every age, without losing anything of its richness and its power.'[1]

We have here reproduced the judgment of a liberal Protestant, not, certainly, to strengthen the authority of the Gospel, but for the joy of finding, once, at least, the same spirit of veneration shared by all who own the Christian name. Many another Gospel passage has suffered much perversion —though never damage—at the hands of heretics; but this still draws to itself the homage of all who believe in Christ.

None the less, in studying the Sermon on the Mount we find that, even here, the Church has to fulfil her beneficent and indispensable rôle. Our Lord spoke in the language of His country and His time—full of imagery and popular in style, deliberately employing proverbs and aphorisms dear to the common people, especially in the East. Indeed, it is this quality that helps to make His discourse so vivid and expressive even to-day. But it is in this, too, that the danger of too literal an interpretation lies. Long ago Origen learnt this lesson by his own experience;[2] and many have learnt it since. The Sermon on the Mount, especially when too narrowly interpreted, has been the pretext for theories of the most violently anti-social kind—as, for example, those of Tolstoy in his time. Against such perversion of the Gospel the common sense of the Christian world has always protested, and the traditional interpretation of the Church is sufficient to put us on our guard—an interpretation as ancient as that of the Gospel itself. We find a trace of this fact in S. Matthew where, for example, the beatitudes are formulated in a more explicitly spiritual way than in S. Luke. It may well be that in this case the literal meaning has been more faithfully preserved by S. Luke; but the spritual sense stressed by S. Matthew is that which Jesus meant to express, and which His hearers understood. For the rest, if Luke seems in some points more literal, Matthew is more complete. Nearly half the Sermon is recorded by him only; and what is more important, Matthew has retained the Judaisms in thought and expression that Luke has allowed to drop, as being less

[1] *Histoire évangélique*, p. 191.
[2] Eusebius, H.E., VI, viii, 2; cp. Matt. xix, 12.

interesting to his Hellenistic readers. This different point of view appears especially in the comparison between the Old and New Law. Expressed so explicitly in S. Matthew (v, 17–48), it is much fainter in S. Luke (vi, 27–36). And this impression is strengthened if we study the two evangelists as a whole, side by side. S. Matthew has faithfully preserved the Semitic form in which our Lord's utterances were cast, while S. Luke has used considerable freedom in adapting them to his readers' habits of thought.[1]

In both Gospels the Sermon begins with the Beatitudes, it being our Lord's intention at the outset to set before His followers an outline of the ideal Christian life. This is no mere introduction, but an essential part of the Sermon itself. Then the relations of the Gospel to the Old Law are defined (v, 17–20), its principal applications worked out (v, 21–vii, 12), and finally its sanctions laid down (vii, 13–27).

II. The Beatitudes.

'Blessed.' It is the first word of the Sermon; and in promulgating His New Law He first set before us the end, true happiness, to which it is His Will that we should attain. Later on we shall find the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews contrasting the terrible revelation of Sinai, given on an inaccessible mountain, amidst thunder and lightning, with that of Christ, full of light and peace (xii, 18). In short, from our Lord's very first words the difference between the two testaments is made clear. Instead of imperious commands, followed by threats of death, we have here set before us at once the ideal standard of virtue, and the happiness that is its result.

So our Lord's first word to His people contains the good news of the Gospel in itself.[2]

Not that similar utterances are rare in the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms and Sapiential books; and to this extent Jesus was adopting a form of expression already familiar to His hearers. But here, as in the parables, by placing His own imprint upon it, Christ made it emphatically

[1] Cp. Burney, *The Poetry of Our Lord* (Oxford, 1925), p. 7. At the other extreme we may note the position of Ed. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfaenge*, I, 242. In this view S. Matthew's version of the Sermon on the Mount is merely a development, able and forceful, but entirely artificial, of that of S. Luke.

[2] Cp. W. Bousset, art. *Bergpredigt*, R.G.G., I, 1st ed., 1032.

His own. With Him it is no mere isolated aspiration, springing up in the course of contemplation and prayer; it is the solemn promise of Him who knows what happiness is and can give it, consecrating the highest duties by the prospect of this supreme reward.

And, throughout, it is the same happiness that He promises under different names: 'In the first beatitude, as a kingdom; in the second, as the promised land; in the third, as true comfort; in the fourth, as the satisfaction of all our cravings; in the fifth, as the supreme mercy taking away our ills and giving us every good. In the sixth under its own name—the Vision of God; in the seventh, as the making perfect of our adoption; in the eighth, once again, as the kingdom of heaven. Note in every case the conclusion; but, although there are many means, each beatitude suggests one of them; and all of them tend to the happiness of mankind.'[1] So, too, we have the same virtue put before us in different forms; the poor, the afflicted, the meek, the hungry, the merciful, the pure, the peacemakers, the persecuted, are, in a word, *Christians*, faithful to the spirit of the Gospel, and like unto their Master Himself.

At first sight, this description of the ideal Christian appears mainly as the antithesis of all that common humanity seeks and desires—wealth, enjoyment, respect—and this is true, but not the whole truth. Otherwise, it would not be easy to understand how our Lord could begin His teaching by a frontal attack on the deepest and most virile instincts of the human race. In all His teaching there was nothing violent or paradoxical; rather He took His stand on what religious principle and pious practice He found in the world in which He moved. This is very clear throughout the rest of the Sermon; starting from the Law and the Prophets, the most sacred elements in Judaism, our Lord consecrated them by His approval and then went beyond them. And it is the same here; the virtues that He extolled and declared blessed—poverty, meekness, mercy, purity—had long been dear to the pious Jew. To such virtues, though, no doubt, imperfectly understood and still more imperfectly practised, earnest souls had been drawn by the Spirit of God; and by their practice prepared to receive the Gospel when it came.

The two or three centuries preceding the coming of Christ were a time of bitter oppression for the Jews. With the

[1] Bossuet, *Méditations sur l'Evangile.*

exception of some brilliant years—but all too short—in the days of the Machabees, this long period brought them nothing but slavery and persecution. They saw their national independence abolished, their religion despised or proscribed, their personal liberty in the hands of their masters, whether Greeks, the house of Herod, or Romans. In comparatively tranquil years, when their soil was not being invaded by an Antiochus, a Gabinius or a Pompey, they always felt the yoke of the stranger weighing upon them, were always objects of contempt and victims of exploitation as ruinous as it was unjust. 'If,' writes Klausner, 'we wish to reckon how many fell in wars and rebellions, or were put to death by Herod and the Roman procurators during this terrible century, we should reach a total of about two hundred thousand men. This is a terrible figuer for comparatively so small a country, and more terrible still if we remember that those who fell in war were physically the pick of the nation, and Herod's victims its intellectual flower.'[1] Decimated by massacres, the country had been impoverished by the exactions of the Herods and by their insane extravagance; for, while the sumptuous buildings raised by Herod the Great flattered the pride of princes, there is no doubt that they were a source of ruin to the country over which they ruled.[2]

Such cruel sufferings, of daily incidence, provoked in many a spirit of exasperation and revolt, in others a haughty pride that found consolation for misfortune in isolation and contempt, and in others again it produced discouragement and a spirit of *laissez faire*. But there were also souls whom such trials brought nearer to God; who were conscious of the true greatness of this life; poor, humble and resigned, but just and faithful to God.[3] In Galilee, where the Sadducees did not exist and where the Pharisees were less influential than at Jerusalem, these 'poor' seem to have been especially numerous, and, with the Zealots, to have accounted for practically the whole population of the province.[1]

Many of the Psalms, as well as many passages from the Prophets, nourished this piety of the 'poor' and prepared the way for Christ. More particularly the portrait traced

[1] Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 167. [2] Cp. ibid., p. 158.
[3] Cp. Isidore Loeb, *La littérature des pauvres dans le Bible*, Paris, 1892; A. Causse, *Les pauvres d'Israel* (*Prophètes, psalmistes, Messianistes*), Strasbourg, 1922. [4] Cp. Klausner, p. 173.

by Isaias (especially in chapter liii) of the Servant of Jehovah tended to draw souls to the ideal which would be later realized by Christ Himself. No doubt the suffering of that infinitely pathetic figure was exceptional; it belonged to an atonement freely undertaken and made to save sinners. But leaving on one side this feature, which as we have it here belongs to Christ alone, the poem as a whole brings home to the reader the spiritual greatness of the humble, the afflicted, the peacemakers, the pure, as our Lord has painted them in the beatitudes. Between these souls and Himself the difference is only that which necessarily lies between the Divine Model and its human copies. The faithful, our Lord's 'little flock,' are well described in Sophonias' prophetic words (iii, 12). 'And I will leave in the midst of thee a poor and needy people: and they shall hope in the name of the Lord.'

Thus by psalms and prophecies Almighty God had prepared His people to receive the person and teaching of the Messias. But all this was no more than a preparation. If we wish to measure the distance which still separates the 'poor' from the Gospel we have only to read over again certain passages of the Psalms and prophetical books: Psalm cviii, for example: 'Set thou the sinner over him: and may the devil stand at his right hand. When he is judged may he go out condemned: and may his prayer be turned to sin. May his days be few: and his bishopric may another take. May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. Let his children be carried about vagabonds, and beg: and let them be cast out of their dwellings. May the usurer search all his substance: and let strangers plunder his labours. May there be none to help him: nor any to pity his fatherless offspring. May his posterity be cut off: in one generation may his name be blotted out. May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered in the sight of the Lord: and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. May they be before the Lord continually; and let the memory of them perish from before the earth. Because he remembered not to show mercy: but persecuted the poor man and the beggar, and the broken in heart to put him to death. And he loved cursing and it shall come unto him: and he would not have blessing, and it shall be far from him. And he put on cursing like a garment: and it went in like water into his entrails, and like oil in his bones. May it be

unto him like a garment which covereth him : and like a girdle with which he is girdled continually. This is the work of them who detract me before the Lord : and who speak evils against my soul ' (cviii, 6–20).

It is true that in these terrible maledictions we can discover one of the fundamental principles expressed in the Sermon on the Mount, namely that he who refuses mercy to others will not obtain it for himself. But on our Lord's lips it is chiefly the law of charity that presses upon Christians the duty of forgiving their enemies, while in the Psalm just quoted it is the law of justice that dooms the pitiless oppressor of the poor to chastisement without mercy. If Christians to-day were to make use of such curses to hurl against their enemies they would justly earn the reproach : ' You know not of what spirit you are.'

There is, then, a vast difference between Jewish and Christian virtue, and this is still more evident if we compare the conception in these two religious systems, of virtues, crown and reward. Thus, in his study on the ' poor '[1] Reuss makes a special merit of the fact that they had ' the strength of mind to confine their interests to this side of the tomb.' It was not their strength but their weakness. No doubt there is nothing more touching or sincere than the Psalmist's confidence in his possession of God. ' For what have I in heaven : And beside thee what do I desire upon earth ? For thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away. Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever. For behold they that go far from Thee shall perish : Thou hast destroyed all them that are disloyal to Thee. But it is good for me to adhere to my God, to put my hope in the Lord God ' (Ps. lxxii, 25–28).

But these words, beyond all question the most beautiful in the Old Testament, cannot bear their full meaning to the Christian unless the union with God of which they speak is assured for all eternity in the indissoluble intimacy of heaven. No doubt he may enjoy that union even here on earth, but only as something half-possessed and with uncertain hold. Too many obstacles keep him from its perfect realization, and the worst of these are his own weakness and sins ; he has only the ' first fruits of the spirit,' he is saved, but his final perseverance is still only a matter of hope (Rom. viii, 23–25). And the beatitudes as stated by our

[1] *Histoire de la Théologie Chrétienne*, I, pp. 117–19.

Lord are at once the complement and completion of aspirations such as these ; but they present them as the foretaste of a happiness that will be infinite and without end.

Many philosophers of to-day who have no use for any conceptions of morality as enforced by sanctions, are shocked at the promise of happiness, claiming that virtue is purer if disinterested and that duty should be accomplished because it *is* duty, and not because it has happiness as its reward. In Hegel's *Life of Jesus*, written in 1795 when he was only twenty-five years old and at that time wholly under the influence of Kant, he attempts to change the whole teaching of the Gospel in accordance with the philosophy so highly valued by him. This is his version of our Lord's precepts about almsgiving and prayer : 'Your reward, if indeed you need the idea of reward at all, is the consoling thought of having done well, and the conviction that even if its author remains unknown to the world, the effect of your action is none the less rich in its consequences in eternity.' This ambitious and sterile philosophy is at the very antipodes of the teaching of Christ. He knew what it was to possess God ; He who came from God and was to return to Him, and who being God Himself, by His intelligence contemplated the Deity face to face. And He who was Man, and who found all His joy in this vision of God, knew that in that human happiness also lay. And He, who at the first moment of His life had attained the end, marked out for us the road we must follow to join Him there —that of poverty, humility, meekness, justice, and purity of heart. That is the great lesson of the beatitudes. And again, a little later, in calling upon His hearers to become His disciples and learn of Him, not content with setting this before them as a duty, He points out to them the happiness that such discipleship would bring in its train (Matt. xi, 28–30). Later still, when questioned by the rich young man as to the way to eternal life, He asks of him great sacrifices, it is true, but promises him an immense reward (Matt. xix, 19, 21). When, in the name of the twelve, S. Peter reminded Him that they have left all and followed Him, our Lord replied :

> 'Amen I say to you, that you, who have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of His majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone that

hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting.' (Matt. xix, 27–29.)[1]

'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets that were before you. You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men. You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid.' (Matt. v, 3–14.)

'And He, lifting up His eyes on His disciples, said: Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for you shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for you shall laugh. Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Be glad in that day and rejoice; for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For according to these things did their fathers to the prophets. But woe to you that are rich: for you have your consolation. Woe to you that are filled: for you shall hunger. Woe to you that now laugh: for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when men shall bless you: For according to these things did their fathers to the false prophets. (Luke vi, 20–26.)

It is enough to compare the two versions to see the profound differences between them. S. Matthew has eight beatitudes; S. Luke only four, but these are followed by four anathemas that are not found in the first Gospel at all.

[1] Cp. Lebreton, *La Vie Chrétienne*, pp. 91–7.

Again in S. Matthew, all the beatitudes, except the last, are stated in sententious forms, and in the third person : ' Blessed are the poor in spirit . . . ' : in S. Luke they are directly addressed to the hearers : ' Blessed are ye poor . . .' Finally—and of capital importance—in S. Matthew the beatitudes are understood in an entirely spiritual sense ; while in S. Luke certain physical conditions seem also to be implied. Thus, when S. Matthew speaks of ' the poor in spirit,' S. Luke says simply ' the poor,' and when the first Gospel has ' they that hunger and thirst after justice,' we find simply, ' ye that hunger,' in S. Luke. On this characteristic the other two differences depend. Thus the four beatitudes that are missing in S. Luke are those whose meaning is of an unquestionably spiritual kind. ' Blessed are the meek ; the merciful ; the clean of heart ; the peacemakers.' And, similarly, if in S. Luke we find our Lord directly addressing the disciples before Him, we must conclude that it was because He found verified in them the very conditions that He was declaring blessed. Consequently, His discourse, instead of being addressed to humanity at large, was intended only for the little flock of disciples who were really and actually hungry, persecuted and poor.

In view of these differences some authors have concluded that we are dealing here with two different discourses of our Lord.[1] We have already rejected this interpretation, which does not take sufficient account of the resemblances between the two. To explain the differences, which we have just shown to be remarkable, nothing more seems to be needed than to recall the fact that these discourses of our Lord were given long before they were incorporated in our present Gospels, and were repeated over and over again in various forms in the catechetical instruction of the Church. One of these versions is repeated by S. Matthew and another by S. Luke ; his being less complete and containing only four beatitudes, but going back to the same common source. S. Luke's version reads as if delivered in a more definite form and with less precaution than S. Matthew's, and may therefore reproduce our Lord's words in a more literal form ; although there is no doubt that the interpretation handed down to us by S. Matthew very accurately represents their authentic sense. It is possible, though by no means certain, that S. Luke's collection, smaller and more

[1] e.g. Azibert, *Revue biblique*, 1894, 94–109.

rigid in form, comes from the little group of disciples with whom poverty was not only a disposition of heart, but a material condition as well. The anathemas which in this version follow the beatitudes would also have been collected by the disciples, whether they belonged originally to the Sermon on the Mount, or were uttered by our Lord at other times. In connection with this last point it must be remembered that we catch a similar tone in the Epistle of S. James (v, 1–7).

> 'Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl in your miseries, which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted: and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered: and the rust of them shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up to yourselves wrath against the last days. Behold the hire of the labourers, who have reaped down your fields, which by fraud has been kept back by you, crieth: and the cry of them hath entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. You have feasted upon earth: and in riotousness you have nourished your hearts, in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and put to death the just one, and He resisted you not. Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth: patiently bearing till he receive the early and the latter rain.'

The sentiment that inspires this burning passage is the same that breathes through the anathemas of our Lord.[1] If the rich are accursed it is not simply because they have used their wealth unjustly and for themselves alone. And it is the same with S. Luke: the poor are declared blessed and

[1] This antithetic method of developing a subject of this kind by enumerating successively beatitudes and curses was familiar enough to the Jews. We find it, for example, in the Book of the Secrets of Enoch, liii, 1:

'Blessed is the man who opens his lips to praise the Lord of Hosts and who praises the Lord with all his heart.—Cursed be the man who opens his lips to speak with contempt and calumny of his neighbours, for it is he himself whom he despises.

Blessed is he who opens his lips to bless and praise God.—Cursed be he before the Lord all the days of his life who opens his lips for cursing and injury.

Blessed is he who praises all the works of the Lord.—Cursed be he who despises the creation of the Lord.

Blessed is he who looks on the ground as he walks and raises him who

the rich cursed, not simply because they are poor or rich, but because the poor desire other and better goods, while the rich are satiated and have had their consolation already.

We have here a point of the greatest consequence, affecting not only the interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount, but the character of the whole Gospel of S. Luke. For the difference between the first and third Gospels that we have noted here is to be found elsewhere, too. For example, we read in S. Matthew, vi, 19: 'Lay not up to yourselves treasure on earth: where the rust and moth consume and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven: where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also;' and in S. Luke, xii, 33:

> 'Sell what you possess, and give alms. Make to yourselves bags which grow not old, a treasure in heaven which faileth not: where no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth.'

The reader may further compare Matthew v, 3, and Luke vi, 20; Matthew v, 42, and Luke vi, 30; Matthew xix, 21, and Luke xviii, 22.

In comparing these texts it has been remarked that where S. Matthew speaks of detachment from riches, S. Luke requires a complete renunciation of all worldly goods. The parable of Dives and Lazarus—recorded by S. Luke—is stressed, and the conclusion drawn that S. Luke condemns all riches and consigns the rich to hell. This is what has been called the Ebionitism of S. Luke. But to interpret thus is to misrepresent the evangelist's mind. It is certain that poverty in the fullest sense was highly esteemed by him, as by our Lord Himself and by the other evangelists as well. We have read the account of the call of the four fishermen of the lake and of S. Matthew himself; it is not S. Luke only

is fallen.—Cursed be he who thinks of nothing but destroying what belongs to another.

Blessed is he who keeps to the foundations laid by his fathers.—Cursed be he who reverses the judgement of his fathers.

Blessed is he who sows peace and love.—Cursed be he who troubles those who love their neighbour.

Blessed is he who speaks to all with humble tongue and heart.—Cursed be he who has peace on his tongue but a sword in his heart.

For all these things will be utterly laid bare, in the scales and books, at the day of the great judgement.'

but the other Synoptics, too, who show us the Apostle forsaking everything—father, fishing-boat, custom-house—for Christ. It is not S. Luke only, but all three Synoptics (Matt. xix, 24 ; Mark x, 25 ; Luke xviii, 25) who record the severest words that ever fell from our Lord's lips on the subject of riches : ' It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.' On the other hand, it is in S. Luke (xix, 1–10) that we read the story of the rich Zacheus who, once converted, made restitution fourfold and gave half his goods to the poor, keeping the rest all the same. And he won from our Lord the words : ' This day is salvation come to this house.' In S. Luke, too, we find the story of the holy women who followed Jesus and out of their fortune ministered to His needs (viii, 2, 3) ; and of the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea who buried Jesus (xxiii, 50–53). Evidently, then, for Luke, no more than for other Christians, are riches in themselves a reason for eternal loss, and Luke's Ebionitism is a fable and nothing else.[1] Only it *is* true that in reproducing certain words of Christ, particularly vi, 20, and xii, 33, Luke had specially in view the group of those who had in the fullest sense forsaken all for Christ.

The true meaning of this beatitude as uttered by our Lord is not in doubt. The poor whom He pronounced blessed are those souls, humble, modest, resigned, wholly dependent upon God, whose tribulations, hopes and prayers are so often celebrated in the Psalms. They are the inner circle of those whom the preaching of the Gospel has reached. In the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus, in proclaiming His mission, read and commented on this prophecy of Isaias : ' The spirit of the Lord is upon me. Wherefore He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor ' (Luke iv, 18) ; and when He willed to give John the proofs of His mission, he told His messengers :

> ' Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen : The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, to the poor the Gospel is preached.' (Luke vii, 22.)

Of old the Psalmist had said to Almighty God : ' To Thee is the poor man left : Thou wilt be a helper to the orphan ' (Ps. x, 14). The poor man has always belonged in a special

[1] Cp. Plummer, *S. Luke*, p. xxv.

sense to God ; he belongs specially to Christ ; it is for the poor that the Gospel is specially designed, and who are specially prepared to receive it ; while the others—surfeited, satisfied with this world's goods, expected nothing of Christ and He has nothing to give them.[1] Whatever the source of this self-sufficing, in so far as it exists, it opposes an insurmountable obstacle to the Gospel : 'Because Thou sayest : I am rich and made wealthy and have need of nothing : and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked . . . ' (Apoc. iii, 17). The reward of the poor is the kingdom of heaven : they possess it already : it is theirs.

'Blessed are the meek : for they shall possess the land.' Already this beatitude had been proclaimed by the Psalmist in the same words : 'But the meek shall inherit the land : and shall delight in abundance of peace' (Ps. xxxvi, 11). The meek or, as Reuss translates, the resigned, are those who rebel neither against God nor man, but who with lowly patience suffer all. 'The meek are those who do not give way before misfortune ; who resist not evil, but overcome evil with good' (Rom. xii, 21).[2] Our Lord pointed to Himself as the model of this virtue (Matt. xi, 29), and S. Paul, in his turn, exhorts his faithful 'by the mildness and modesty of Christ' (2 Cor. x, 1). In the Psalm the reward is the land of Canaan from which the wicked will be driven out, while the meek will possess it as their inheritance. Of course, in renewing this promise, our Lord, as always, raises its meaning to a higher plane. Here the 'promised land' is the new earth, the abode of those who live in God.

'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' This 'mourning' may be of many kinds. S. Chrysostom sees it mainly as grief for sins committed, either by oneself or by others.[3] With S. Augustine it is sad-

[1] We may recall S. Bernard's touching words in his Fifth Sermon on the Nativity of our Lord. P.L., CXXXIII, 139 : 'He consoles His people, that is the race of the humble whom He will save. . . . Would you know His people ? "To Thee is the poor man left," said the man according to God's own heart. And He Himself says in the Gospel : "Woe to you that are rich for you have your consolation. . . ." The infancy of Christ does not console the fine speaker ; the tears of Christ console not those who laugh ; His swaddling-clothes console not those who parade in fine robes ; His crib and His stable console not those who love the place of honour in the synagogues.'

[2] S. Augustine, *in hoc loco* (P.L., XXXIV, 1232).

[3] P.G., LVII, 225–6.

ness, of which bereavement is the cause.[1] All such griefs borne with humble resignation draw the soul nearer to God, and such souls will be comforted by Him. On the last day of His life Jesus said to His disciples : ' Amen, amen, I say to you that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice ; and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy ' (John xvi, 20). And these promises find an echo in the Apocalypse : ' Behold the tabernacle of God with men : and He will dwell with them. And they shall be His people and God Himself with them shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes : and death shall be no more. Nor mourning, nor sorrow, nor crying shall be any more : for the former things are passed away ' (xxi, 3, 4).

' Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice : for they shall have their fill.' Justice is to be understood here in the most general sense of perfection, or holiness ; so we find our Lord saying a little further on : (Matt. v, 20) '. . . Unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' ' Blessed,' says Bossuet, ' are those who desire justice with the same eagerness with which people desire to eat and drink, when they are tormented with hunger and thirst ; for they shall be satisfied. And with what should a man be satisfied if not with justice ? It will be so even in this life ; for to satisfy his eagerness the just will make himself more just, and the holy more holy. But the perfect satisfaction is reserved for heaven, where eternal justice will be given to us with the fulness of the love of God.' ' I shall be satisfied,' says the Psalmist (xvi, 15), ' when Thy glory shall appear.' Our Lord often made use of this metaphor to represent both the ardour of the desire and the fulfilment promised to it. ' . . . Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again : but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst for ever. But the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting ' (John iv, 13, 14), and again : ' . . . If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He that believeth in Me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water ' (John vii, 37, 38). And once more the Apocalypse echoes ' . . . And he that thirsteth, let

[1] Luctus est tristitia de amissione carorum (P.L., XXXIV, 1232).

him come. And he that will, let him take the water of life, freely (Apoc. xxii, 17).[1]

'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' This beatitude is closely connected with the preceding one inasmuch as in scriptural language mercy is linked with justice.[2] The term has here its full meaning, denoting at one and the same time almsgiving and forgiveness and, in general, all the manifestations of tenderness, charity and pity alike. The mercy promised is God's mercy in our regard, and is one of the principal subjects of our Lord's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount and the Gospels as a whole. This lesson was carefully included, in the form of a petition, in the Lord's prayer: 'And forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors. For if you will forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offences. But if you will not forgive men, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you' (Matt. vi, 12, 14, 15). And in words recorded by all three Synoptics: 'With what measure you mete it shall be measured to you again' (Matt. vii, 2; Mark iv, 24; Luke vi, 38). Not, most certainly, that God's mercy bears any proportion to that of men. 'The reward,' says S. Chrysostom,[3] 'seems equal to the virtue of the act. Men act mercifully and receive mercy from God. But there is no equality between human and Divine mercy; rather there is between them the same distance as that between kindness and ill-will.' Elsewhere our Lord Himself stresses the difference in the parable of the unmerciful servant, who, while owing ten thousand talents, refused to forgive a debt of one hundred pence (Matt. xviii, 23–35).

[1] 'So he will thirst no more,' repeats Bossuet in his meditations on this passage. 'And the reason will be that he will desire no other pleasure, joy or good than he will taste in Jesus Christ. Yet he will be always thirsty, for he will not cease to desire this supreme good and will wish to possess it more and more. Here, then, is one who will be always thirsty, yet he will be always quenching his thirst, because he has within him a spring eternally welling up. His is in no way the exhausting and insatiable thirst of those who seek the pleasures of sense. He will always thirst for justice; but with his lips always pressed to the source within himself, never will his thirst bring upon him weariness or fatigue. . . . Come, holy souls, to Jesus: desire, drink, gulp eagerly; fear not that this heavenly water will fail you: the source bears no proportion to your thirst: its abundance is greater than your need: *Fons vincit sitientem*, as S. Augustine said.'

[2] Mich. vi, 8; Ps. xvii, 24–6; Isa. lviii, 1–11; Matt. xxiii, 23: 'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you tithe mint and anise and cummin and have left the weightier things of the law: judgement and mercy and faith.'

[3] P.G., LVII, 227.

'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.' The purity to which Christ here gives His blessing is not simply the moral virtue opposed to unchastity, but, in general, innocence and simplicity of heart. It was this that was in the Psalmist's mind when he wrote: 'Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place? The innocent in hands, and clean of heart' (xxiii, 3, 4). And it was the same with Isaias when he describes his vision of God: 'In the year that king Ozias died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated: and His train filled the temple. Upon it stood the seraphims: the one had six wings: with two they covered his face, and with two they covered his feet, and with two they flew. And they cried one to another and said: Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord God of hosts; all the earth is full of His glory. And the lintels of the doors were moved at the voice of him that cried: and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: Woe is me, because I have held my peace; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people that hath unclean lips, and I have seen with my eyes the King, the Lord of hosts. And one of the seraphims flew to me: and in his hand was a live coal, which he had taken with the tongs off the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said: Behold this hath touched thy lips, and thy iniquities shall be taken away, and thy sin shall be cleansed' (vi, 1–7).

Eastern rulers were never easily accessible, and to be admitted to their presence was a privilege both sought after and dreaded;[1] but between them and Jehovah there was no comparison at all. The sense of God's transcendence and infinite holiness, always extremely vivid in the Hebrew race, was developed, even to excess, in the apocalyptic literature of the Jews. Still it was for the vision of God that they longed: 'But as for me,' says the Psalmist, 'I will appear before Thy sight in justice: I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear' (xvi, 15). Our Lord approves and sanctifies these longings and promises to satisfy them; but the promise is only made to the pure in heart.[2]

[1] Cp. 3 Kings x, 8; Esther, i, 14.

[2] This beatitude has been studied at length by S. Augustine in his treaty 'de videndo Deo' (Ep. 147, P.L., XXXIII, 596–622). Writing to Paulina he shows that God cannot be seen with the eyes of the body, and that this vision is reserved to the pure of heart. Then he quotes and comments on a long text of S. Ambrose (in Lucam, i, 1–11): 'In ipsa

'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.' The text from Hebrews (xii, 14) that we quote in the note below shows the close connection between this beatitude and the one immediately before. A pure heart is a source of peace: and one who has peace in his heart will spread it abroad among men. At the cradle of the Christ-Child the angels proclaimed peace as God's great gift to men (Luke ii, 13, 14), and our Lord, on His part, radiates peace, offers refreshment to those who labour and are burdened (Matt. xi, 29), and on the last day of His life bequeathed peace to His Apostles (John xiv, 27). When He sent the twelve on their preaching expedition He told them to greet their hosts with the salutation of peace (Matt. x, 12); and when He Himself appeared to them after His Resurrection, He indeed gave them His peace (John xx, 19, 21, 26); while they in their turn bestowed the same gift

quoque resurrectione non facile est Deum videre, nisi iis qui corde sunt mundo: et ideo beati mundo corde; ipsi enim Deum videbunt. Quantos beatos iam numeraverat, et tamen videndi his Deum non promiserat facultatem! Si ergo ii qui mundo sit corde, Deum videbunt; utique alii non videbunt. Neque enim indigni Deum videbunt; neque is qui Deum videre noluerit, potest Deum videre. Nec in loco Deus videtur, sed mundo corde; nec corporalibus oculis Deus quæritur, nec circumscribitur visu, nec tactu tenetur, nec auditur affatu, nec sentitur incessu. Et cum absens putatur, videtur; et cum præsens est, non videtur. . . .' Towards the end of his treatise he adds (621) the authority of S. Jerome: 'Non solum Patris divinitatem, sed nec Filii quidem, nec Spiritus Sancti, quia una in Trinitate natura est, possunt oculi carnis aspicere, sed oculi mentis; de quibus ipse Salvator sit: beati mundo corde, quia ipsi Deum videbunt' (III *in Isa.*, 6). S. Augustine himself, after having reminded his readers of the theophanies of Sacred History, remarks that the desire of the Saints is not for such manifestations as these which are not God Himself; it is Himself that they long to see; Himself, as He is; that is the happiness promised for the other life and only for pure hearts. 'Nec ideo videbunt, quia pauperes spiritu in hac vita fuerunt, quia mites, quia lugentes, quia esurientes et sitientes iustitiam, quia misericordes, quia pacifici, quia persecutionem passi propter iustitiam, quamvis hæc omnia iidem ipsi sint; sed quia mundo sunt corde . . . quoniam mundo corde videbitur qui nec in loco videtur, nec oculis corporalibus quæritur, nec circumscribitur visu, nec tactu tenetur, nec auditur affatu, nec sentitur incessu' (605). So in this beatitude we recognize at once a condition fixed by Almighty God, and with the promise that it contains S. Augustine connects that which our Lord made to His apostles later on: 'Qui diligit me diligetur a Patre meo, et ego diligam eum et manifestabo ei meipsum' (John xiv, 21; ibid., 609); and similarly in Heb. xii, 14: 'Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see God.' But, further, there is a peculiarly intimate connection between the virtue practised and its reward. It is with the heart that we see God, but only if the heart is pure. If it is sullied with sin it will be incapable of this vision. There will be no need for God to chastise man; through his self-blindness man will punish himself.

on their converts to the Faith (Rom. i, 7 ; 1 Cor. i, 3, etc.). The reward promised to the peacemakers is that they shall have the title of 'Children of God' ; for truly God is 'the God of Peace' (Rom. xv, 33 ; xvi, 20 ; 1 Cor. xiv, 33 ; Phil. iv, 9 ; 1 Thess. v, 23 ; Heb. xiii, 20), just as Christ is 'our peace' (Eph. ii, 14) and 'the Lord of Peace' (2 Thess. iii, 16), so the peacemakers who live in peace and spread it around them are filled with God's own Spirit, and are therefore called His children ; which expression must be understood not merely in the broad sense it often has in the Gospel,[1] but as having its full force. The peacemakers are truly of God's family, because they set up around them that unity of which God Himself is the ideal : 'That they all may be one as Thou, Father, in me, and I in Thee ; that they also may be one in us' (John xvii, 22, 23).

'Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'[2] In the four previous beatitudes the virtues proposed by Christ to His disciples were already attractive in themselves, even apart from their promised reward ; for every right-minded person both admires and desires the thirst after justice, mercy, innocence and peace. But persecution is another thing ; and it would seem as if we were getting back to the apparent paradox of the first three beatitudes. Yet even these could claim the support of a long tradition ; for Jewish piety tended to regard as blessed the humble, the afflicted, and the meek ; but not as yet the victims of persecution. No doubt the Old Testament prophets and saints had suffered persecution, a fact that our Lord Himself was about to recall ; but they had not looked on such persecutions as the pledge of future happiness and special privilege of the friends of God. It was for the Gospel to make known this secret, which could not have been endured before Christ, the supreme example of such teaching, came into the world : but now that example would draw all Christians even to that point, and the heavenly vision would sustain them in their trial. And this

[1] Cp. 'The children of light, of darkness, of Belial.'

[2] S. Augustine (P.L., XXXIV, 1233) shows the connection between this beatitude and that immediately preceding it : 'Hac pace intrinsecus constituta atque firmata, quascumque persecutiones ille qui foras missus est forinsecus concitaverit, auget gloriam quæ secundum Deum est non aliquid in illo ædificio labefactans, sed deficientibus machinis suis innotescere faciens quanta firmitas intus exstructa sit. Ideo sequitur : Beati qui persecutionem patiuntur propter iustitiam.'

was the prospect that our Lord unfolded before His Apostles' eyes:

> 'But beware of men. For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And you shall be brought before governors, and before kings for My sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles,' (Matt. x, 17, 18);

and then He added these terrible words:

> 'And you shall be hated by all men for My name's sake,' (22);

and a little further on:

> 'The disciple is not above the master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the good man of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household? Therefore fear them not' (24, 26).

And later still Jesus explained once more to His disciples the profound reason for their persecution which would, at the same time, be the supreme consolation of their life!

> 'If the world hate you, know you that it hath hated Me before you. If you had been of the world: the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember My word that I said to you: The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake: because they know not Him that sent Me.' (John xv, 18, 21.)

The imminence of the Passion must have given to these final warnings a peculiar force, graving them on the Apostles' hearts; and, indeed, the history of the Church from its earliest days, shows that these last lessons had borne fruit.

> 'And they, indeed, went from the presence of the council rejoicing, that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.' (Acts v, 41.)

This joy, manifesting itself in so many of the Acts of the Martyrs, and already even in the letters of S. Ignatius, is certainly one of the greatest miracles of the Christian Faith.[1] And we find our Lord insisting on this beatitude more than all the others; not only duplicating His statement but forsaking, for once, His aphoristic method of making it, and directly addressing those to whom He speaks:

> 'Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake: Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets that were before you.'

And indeed the examples of the Old Testament prophets and saints has always been dear to the Christian heart; we see them in the Epistle to the Hebrews: scourged, chained, imprisoned, stoned, persecuted in every way, 'of whom the world was not worthy' (xi, 33–40). And Holy Church celebrates them still to-day, for instance, on the Feast of Machabees. But these illustrious examples have been thrown into the shade by those, still more glorious, of the Christian martyrs; in them we find that spirit of joy and almost of gaiety that Jesus not only foretold but demanded of His disciples.

A striking feature of this beatitude is its statement of the motive of the persecutions, 'for justice' sake' and 'for My sake.' And the two are identical: for justice is fidelity to Christ; and in the other passages referred to above, our Lord, in predicting the persecutions that await the Apostles, stresses this as their cause and at the same time the disciples' glory. 'You shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake.' 'You shall be hated by all men for My name's sake.' 'And all this shall they do to you for My sake.' We recognize here one of the most striking and revealing features of the preaching of Christ. He spoke little of Himself, or the facts concerning His person or mission on the earth, yet He made all this sufficiently known by the simple promulgation of His laws. The rule He sets before men had Himself as its example; the motive of the persecutions He foretold was His own name; the final sentence describing

[1] Cp. S. Jerome (P.L., XXVI, 35): 'Nescio quis hoc nostrum possit implere, ut laceretur opprobriis fama nostra et nos exsultemus in Domino. Hoc qui vanam sectatur gloriam, implere non potest.'

the happiness or eternal misery of a man would be spoken by Him. Let anyone enter on this way, and follow it, and he will not be slow in acknowledging that He had the right so to speak. This is S. Chrysostom's commentary on this very passage: 'Christ here makes known His dignity as equal to His Father's; just as the Old Testament Saints had suffered for the Father, so, He tells His disciples, must you suffer for Me.'[1]

And the same holy doctor shows how the other beatitudes prepare the way for this, the highest and seemingly most unattainable of all. 'The Lord,' he says, 'has taken care to bring us to this point through the golden chain of the beatitudes. He who is humble will willingly weep for his sins; in thus weeping for them he will show himself meek, just and merciful; but if he possess these virtues he will also be pure of heart. He will be a peacemaker, too; and then he will be fortified against all attacks, resting untroubled at the evil spoken of him, or the ills that man may force him to undergo.'[2]

But if we are thus drawn upwards by this 'chain of gold,' it is because it binds us to the supreme model whose example is really the constraining force. More by His life, even, than His words, has Christ defined the Christian ideals; He had tested the beatitudes before preaching them. Being rich, He was made poor—first with that essential poverty that is the common lot of man, but also with the poverty that, within humanity itself, is the special lot of the humble and little ones of the world. He took it up in His very cradle, kept it throughout His artisan's life and His public ministry ('The foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests: but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head'); and carried it with Him to the Cross. Nor did He invest this poverty with the external insignia of exceptional austerity which characterized that of John the Baptist; but He took upon Himself poverty, vulgar and despised, experienced and feared by the generality of men, that they might see it in Him and learn henceforth to love it.

He described Himself as 'meek and humble of heart,' thus drawing the attention and imitation of the disciples to the virtues He wished them to value most; He is the Lamb of God, the sheep led to the slaughter not opening His mouth; Jehovah's servant who does not quench the burn-

[1] P.G., LVII, 229. [2] Ibid., 230–231.

ing flax, nor break the bruised reed. Then He is supreme mercy, healing all infirmities, pardoning all offences, and loving to repeat the prophet's words : ' I desired mercy and not sacrifice.' He is the Prince of Peace, bringing peace into all hearts and, by His Blood, sealing God's peace with the world. He is purity itself, the Virgin's Son, who could defy His very enemies to convict Him of sin. Hungry for justice He could say : ' My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent Me ; ' and it is He whom His disciples will see avenging God's honour in the Temple, and will be reminded of the words : ' The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up ' (Ps. lxviii, 10). And withal He is the supreme victim of persecution ; by Herod, at His very birth ; by the Pharisees and the Tetrarch throughout His ministry ; and on the dreadful day of His Passion by all the powers of earth, agents of the invisible Prince of this present world.

And yet poor, afflicted, persecuted as He was, He was happy, and in a way that none has been before or since. For He possessed, as no other human being will ever possess it, the kingdom and the vision of God. So in pronouncing the beatitudes He spoke from His own experience. Besides, more than once, we shall meet this interior happiness of Christ revealing itself amidst the very realization of the ideal of poverty and suffering ; as when with a thrill of admiring love He exclaims : ' I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in Thy sight ' (Matt. xi, 25). And above all, when face to face with His Passion : '. . . I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized. And how am I straitened until it be accomplished ? ' (Luke xii, 50).

This whole programme of humility and death was imposed upon Jesus as Redeemer of the world ; and if it was for Him thus to humble Himself and to suffer, it was that He might atone for man's rebellion and the forbidden pleasure of sin. But, in His turn, He is our model and our ideal ; whose example traces for us the only way by which we can reach the kingdom of God. So, in the last analysis, the whole scheme of the beatitudes was determined by God with the redemption of the world in view. If, for the moment, we could mentally eliminate the idea of original sin, and transport ourselves to the earthly paradise, we should find that

conditions of happiness prevailed of quite a different kind; sorrow, mourning, persecution would no longer be the lot of God's children and the mark of their predestination to eternal life. God, our loving Father, finds no pleasure in our tears, nor was it suffering that He originally chose as our portion here below. But when sin had destroyed the primitive design, He conceived that which is in operation now. And whoever contemplates its realization in Christ and attempts to carry it out in his own life will quickly find the traces of a plan woven throughout of wisdom and love.[1]

'You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for

[1] On the beatitudes may be consulted L. Pirot, art. *Béatitude*, in *Supplement au Dictionnaire de la Bible*, I, 927–39; for parallels in Jewish literature, see P. Fiebig, *Jesu Bergpredigt* (Goettingen, 1924), pp. 1–20; Billerbeck, I, 189–232.

A century after the composition of the Gospels (*c.* 160–70) the author of the *Acts of Paul* represents the Apostle as proclaiming a number of beatitudes, inspired by the Gospels, but embodying, above all, a preaching of continence, and of flight from the world. If not, like that of the Encratites, completely false, the ideals expressed are none the less narrower than those of the Gospel; and they light up by contrast the character of the Sermon on the Mount which, as we have seen, contains an ideal truly Divine but offered to all as the aim of their lives. The passage referred to is as follows:

'Blessed are they whose heart is pure, for they shall see God.

Blessed are they who guard the chastity of their flesh, for they shall be the temple of God.

Blessed are the continent, for they shall hold converse with God.

Blessed are they who renounce this world, for they shall please God.

Blessed are they who have wives as if they had them not, for God shall be their inheritance.

Blessed are they who have the fear of God, for they shall be angels of God.

Blessed are they who fear the words of God, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are they who have compassed the wisdom of Jesus Christ, for they shall be called the sons of the Most High.

Blessed are they who preserved baptism, for they shall rest in the Presence of the Father and the Son.

Blessed are they who have grasped the wisdom of Jesus Christ, for they shall live in the light.

Blessed are they who, for the love of God, have rejected the appearance of this world, for they shall judge the angels and will be glorified at the right hand of the Father.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall find mercy and shall not see the bitter day of judgement.

Blessed be the bodies of virgins, for they shall be agreeable to God and shall not lose the price of their chastity, for the work of the Father shall be to them the work of salvation in the day of His Son, and they shall find in Him rest through the eternity of eternities' (*Actes de Paul*, v and vi, ed. Vouaux, pp. 154 ff. Cp. ibid., introduction, p. 79; Headlam, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ*, pp. 216 ff.

nothing any more but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men. You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.' (Matt. v, 13–16.)[1]

Our Lord's teaching on the beatitudes put forward the new ideal of the Christian life; now it remains to make it known in the world. This will be the Apostles' task. What our Lord had just been saying would have sufficiently warned them of the persecution awaiting them; yet, in spite of those risks they could not become indifferent to preaching the Gospel of Christ. They had received the truth and were responsible for it to all mankind. From henceforth they were the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. The two metaphors, 'salt of the earth' and 'light of the world' are clearly used in the same sense.[2] Eliseus of old purified undrinkable water by throwing in a little salt (IV Kings ii, 21); and this was the mission of the Apostles. They were scattered about the whole world in order to purify it. To grasp the force of the similitude we must remember that salt in Palestine is not pure; it can lose its savour and be only good to throw away. And this is the fate reserved for corrupt or degenerate disciples of Christ. In persecution there is nothing to fear, but rather every ground for hope; but if we let our spiritual life deteriorate, we are of no further use but to be trampled underfoot.[3]

[1] We find this double comparison of salt and light in a different context in Mark and Luke; salt in Mark ix, 50, and Luke xiv, 34–5; and light in Mark iv, 21, and Luke xi, 33. We have, therefore, one of those cases where we may ask if Matthew has preserved the authentic development of the discourse or has inserted sentences spoken by our Lord at another time. We are bound to say, however, that the passages in question seem more in their natural context here than in the other Synoptic Gospels.

[2] The 'salt of the covenant' of which we read in the Old Testament (Lev. ii, 13; Num. xviii, 19; 2 Par. xiii, 5), signifying the covenant of God with His people, calls up a different picture: that of a common repast setting a seal upon a friendship or an agreement.

[3] 'Non itaque calcatur ab hominibus qui patitur persecutionem, sed qui persecutionem timendo infatuatur. Calcari enim non potest nisi inferior; sed inferior non est qui quamvis in corpore multa in terra sustineat, corde tamen fixus in cælo est' (S. Augustine, P.L., XXXIV, 1237).

The city set on a hill, the light put in the candlestick and thence illuminating the whole house, express the same idea of that ever widening influence expected of His disciples by our Blessed Lord. The Church was to adopt this imagery to symbolize her rôle in the world, as the holy city, crowning the high mountains and displaying to the gaze of all the insignia of her origin and of her sanctity first of all. This is what our Lord asks of His disciples before all else: after having told them that their light should shine before all men He adds: 'that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' No doubt they are doctors—bound by their office to teach, and He expressly gave them the charge to do so: 'Going, therefore, teach ye all nations,' but above all they are to be models, themselves exemplifying the Christian ideal set before them by our Lord. This was the function of S. John the Baptist, to be 'a burning and a shining light,' and it was theirs, too; and it is that of all Christians as well, for the Sermon on the Mount was not spoken only to the Apostles, but to all the disciples of Christ. Here, with S. Chrysostom, we may well remind ourselves that 'if all Christians were to obey the commandments of the Lord, such a light would be spread throughout the world that there would be no heathen left.'

III. The Old and the New Law.

In the first part of His discourse our Lord set forth the Christian ideal, tracing its main features; leaving many details purposely obscure, but putting in the clearest light the characteristic virtues of the Gospel: humility, meekness, purity, resignation and joy in suffering. For this revelation His hearers had been partly prepared by prophet and psalmist of old; but as a whole it was new to them, and they could not but ask, what in this new dispensation was to be the fate of what they had always considered to be the last word in religion, i.e., the Law itself.[1]

[1] In the Judaism of this period the Law was considered as *the* Divine Revelation, sovereign, definitive and irrevocable. Cp. Strack-Billerbeck, I, pp. 244–6; Moore, *Judaism*, I, pp. 263–80. In many quarters the Law had come to be identified with Wisdom and consequently the Torah regarded as the daughter of God, and as a transcendent and pre-existent being. Cp. Strack-Billerbeck, II, pp. 353–5; Moore, I, 264–9; Lebreton, *Le Dogme de la Trinité*, II, pp. 649 ff. The same could not be said of the other sacred books, the Prophets and Hagiographs. These were only given to Israel because of its sins, and when the Messianic era came they

And yet from the very beginning of our Lord's preaching, His hearers had observed that with regard to the official teaching of the time, He was accustomed to take liberties which were novel and sometimes even disconcerting in their eyes. It was evident that He in no sense held as of obligation all the prescriptions of the scribes; but would His independent action stop there, or would it go so far as to affect the Law itself? For the believing Jew there could not be a graver question; and our Lord had to settle it in this explanation of His whole programme. This was the more so since He had called His disciples expressly so that they might spread His teaching abroad; so He must reveal it to them in all its fulness.[1]

> 'Do not think that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For amen I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the Law, till all be fulfilled. He therefore that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But he that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, that unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'[2] (Matt. v, 17–20.)

These statements, so solemn in character, were of a nature to reassure the disciples in the fullest degree. For they heard their Jewish faith not only respected, but stamped with the official approval of our Lord. Still they could not help seeing that in this matter of the Law, the Master went beyond the teaching usually received: 'to fulfil' meant not merely to put into practice but to complete.[3]

When we re-read these statements of our Lord we recall

would have no more reason for their existence (Strack-Billerbeck, I, p. 246), everything being transformed into a new life. An Amorah, Rabbi Joseph, writes in the same sense (*Niddah*, 61 *b*): 'The commandments will be abrogated in the world to come,' a remark which ought certainly to be understood of the new conditions of that life. Cp. Klausner, p. 275; Moore, I, pp. 272–5. Whatever these glimpses of changes to come may mean, nothing of this kind is expected for the present world in which we live.

[1] Cp. S. Augustine, P.L., XXXIV, 1239.

[2] Cp. Luke xvi, 17, and the comment on this passage in Moore, *Judaism*, I, pp. 269 ff.

[3] Cp. K. Benz, *Die Stellung Jesu zum alttestamentlichen Gesetz* (Fribourg, 1914), pp. 38–48.

other features of both His actions and His words: the liberty He claimed in the matter of the Sabbath, that was made for man and not the reverse; the principle He brought forward in opposition to rabbinical precepts with regard to clean and unclean food: 'Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man: but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.' Most of all, we remember the highly significant statements about the old garments that cannot be mended with the new stuff; of the old bottles that the new wine will cause to burst; or again of so clear and concise a statement of the superiority of the Gospel as we have in the words:

> 'Amen I say to you, there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is the lesser in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.'

And then: '. . . all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.' (Matt. xi, 11, 13.)

It seems clear enough that the Law and the prophets represented a past epoch, brought to a conclusion in the career of John the Baptist himself, and that this new period was the kingdom of heaven. How, it might well be asked, could words like these be harmonized with the definite sanction our Lord had given to the Law: 'I say unto you until heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law till all be fulfilled'?

To minimize this apparent contradiction, certain commentators have thought it possible to distinguish between the moral and ritual laws of the Old Dispensation. Christ, they think, would have sanctioned the first, while abolishing the second. But there is nothing in the present passage or in the Gospel story to authorize any distinction of this kind. Jesus took part in the sacrifice and the liturgical prayers of the Temple and the synagogues; and we have seen how He imposed on the leper He had healed the fulfilment of purification required by the Law (Mark i, 44). On the other hand, we shall find as we follow the rest of the Sermon on the Mount, that our Lord's efforts were mainly concentrated on removing or perfecting the precepts of the Moral Law.[1]

[1] Other scholars think the problem can only be solved by eliminating one of the elements. In their view verses 18 and 19 are pharisaic in con-

A number of theologians and historians have considered that Jesus, while professing a boundless respect for the Law, let Himself be unconsciously drawn into an attitude of opposition whose consequences He did not foresee. So Weinel: 'Jesus never became aware that His preaching tended to the destruction of the law; but His opponents saw more clearly than He.'[1] In the same sense Klausner writes: '. . . Jesus' attitude was instinctive rather than conscious; expressed in His parables and in His toleration of certain actions of His disciples; in the opposition implied in the words: "It was said to them of old, but I say unto you"; but above all in His unrestrained attacks on the Pharisees. In all these ways He created an attitude of depreciation of the ceremonial laws; tending to make them secondary to the moral code, and almost to suppress them altogether. But we must insist on the "almost": never did He press His teaching to its final result. And for Himself He observed the ceremonial laws up to the last night of His life.'[2]

These critical and psychological solutions of the problem are rejected by all Catholics, and they ought to be. Nor is it necessary to call in authority in order to refute them; for that, a study of the Gospel story itself will quite suffice.

The function of the law, as compared with the Gospel, was one of preparation; it was the teacher who had to train a people still children in mental and moral outlook, and prepare them for the kingdom of God.

In this long training of folk still crude and rough, it was necessary at least to accustom them to the exercise of virtuous acts; thus, little by little, customs would be formed, would react upon and gradually transform the interior dispositions of the soul. No doubt this would be but imperfectly done; but one day the new law would be promulgated; the law of grace, which would not only convey the commandment, but supply both the wish and the strength

ception and foreign to our Lord's spirit. They express not what our Lord said but what people were thinking in Christian circles in Jerusalem, twenty years after His death (Votaw, loc. cit., 25*a*; Holtzmann, *N. T. Theol.*, I (Tübingen, 1911), p. 264 and note). For the same reason many critics reject Matt. xxiii, 2, 3: 'The scribes and the Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do: but according to their works do ye not.'

[1] *Biblische Theologie des N. T.* (Tübingen, 1921), p. 90.

[2] *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 370.

to keep it. And this new law would be able to make more radical demands, because it would carry within itself the means of satisfying them. There lay the new order of things that Christ was going to set up; the *New Law*, which the Sermon on the Mount promulgated but did not yet put into force. It was only by His death that Christ could merit for us the graces that the observance of Christian law requires; and it was to the Cross that He would nail the Old Law as a trophy of the victory He had won (cp. Col. ii, 14). And so He had to lend His authority to that Old Law which was in no sense, as yet, abolished. This survival of the Mosaic precepts was necessary to protect the growing Church; later on, Christians would be able to say with S. Paul (1 Cor. xiii, 11), 'when I became a man, I put away the things of a child.' But they had to *become* men, first of all. Here lies the whole difference between the methods of Christ and that of the so-called reformers of later days. The whole thought of these men, whether Protestants of the sixteenth century or modernists of our time, has been at one blow to destroy the abuses that they saw or imagined; but Jesus, anxious above all for the well-being of individual souls, had come to bring into the world a new life; and to preserve this still tender plant, He left it the protection of the customs of the past. 'The ignorant and the fanatical,' observes a Protestant writer in this connection, 'may find pleasure in mere destruction, without thought of the future; quite otherwise is the method of the founder of a fruitful reform. Abstaining from any effort to overthrow everything at one fell blow, he states his principle and leaves it to develop quietly, until the old forms burst of their own accord under the internal pressure of organs adapted to new needs. . . .'[1] We have already seen our Lord taking this line in His relations with S. John the Baptist; and we see it still more clearly as time goes on, in His strict observance of the law; and His Apostles could not do other than follow Him in His regard for the interest of souls and the designs of Providence.

When we have once grasped this rule of conduct we have less difficulty in interpreting the texts before us at the moment. The first principle laid down by our Lord in this matter gives us the key to all the rest: 'I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.' 'The end of the law is Christ' (Rom.

[1] Bovon, *Théol. du N. T.*, I, p. 416.

x, 4) ; and the Gospel which our Lord was promulgating here, on the mountain, was not, therefore, the abolition, but rather the crowning of what had gone before. And He went on to say : '. . . Amen, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle of the law shall not pass, till all be fulfilled.' These last words determine the sense of the preceding ones ; the Law will not fail until it has borne its fruit. Nothing in it will prove sterile or pass away otherwise than by being fulfilled ; the minutest details—jots and tittles—were designed by God, and have therefore a significance that will never fail. And this is implied in the words that follow. 'He, therefore, that shall break one of these least commandments and shall so teach men shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.' To be worthy of that kingdom a man must know and respect the Law in such a way that rejecting nothing, he understands and fulfils all.[1]

Such prudence and respect will appear the more necessary if we remember how violent the reaction against the Law threatened, later on, to be. Marcion, in the second century, would claim the authority of the Apostle in denying that the Old Testament could have come from a good God ; and so deeply would this heresy have penetrated into many minds that S. Chrysostom, in commenting on the Sermon on the Mount, would find it necessary to remind his hearers that the Law did not come from the devil.[2] We can imagine what the danger of impieties of this sort would have been to our Lord's contemporaries, if His teaching on the point had been less formal than it was.

The last words (verse 20) recall the first : 'I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil,' our Lord had said at the beginning : and now : 'unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

[1] Cp. Augustine (1239) : '*Quibus verbis ostendit in Lege ad effectum etiam minima quæque perduci.*'

We may here refer to an interesting variant of Luke vi, 4, in the Codex Bezæ : 'Jesus, seeing a man working on the Sabbath day, said to him : "O man, if you know what you are doing, you are in a happy state : but if not you are accursed and a transgressor of the Law." ' Another alleged saying of our Lord, quoted by S. Clement of Alexandria, brings out the conservative aspect of this teaching : 'Jesus said : "If you do not fast so far as this world is concerned, you will not find the kingdom of God, and if you keep not the Sabbath, you will not see the Father ' " (*Antilegomena*, p. 22).

[2] Hom. xvii ; P.G., LVII, 262.

This perfection of the Law of the Gospel was a revelation, the giving of which was reserved to the Son of God Himself. But the question arises: In what, precisely, does its fulness and—when compared with former revelations—its novelty consist? Our Lord proceeded to make this clear by taking certain precepts of the Mosaic Law and showing how they acquire a new perfection under the dispensation of Christ.

The examples of this process that we find here in S. Matthew (v, 21–48) fall into two groups of three paragraphs each. In these our Lord first recalls the letter of the Law and its current interpretation: 'You have heard that it was said' (21, 27, 33, 38, 43), or simply: 'it hath been said' (31); and immediately afterwards promulgates His own Law: 'But I say unto you.' All commentators have been struck by the authority thus affirmed, both over the Law that is being perfected and over the consciences upon whom it is imposed. This is thus stressed by S. Chrysostom: 'Do you not see the sovereign authority, the authority that belongs to the legislator alone? Who ever spoke thus among the prophets or among the just men of the Old Testament? Or among the patriarchs of an earlier age? None. Further, all these were accustomed to say: Thus saith the Lord. But the Son takes another tone. They passed on their Master's commands; He, those of His Father. And when I say: Those of His Father, I mean His own, too; for mine is thine, He said, and thine is mine. Again they speak to men, servants of God, like themselves; while He speaks to His own servants.'[1]

In the three precepts of the first group, our Lord treats of murder (21), adultery (27), and divorce (31). Here He is directly concerned with the Mosaic Law with a view to applying it on a wider scale and especially in a more interior sense; while in the last three it is less the Law itself than the current interpretation of the Scribes that our Lord undertakes to correct.

Here, too, the subjects are of great importance, and concern social relations of every kind—truth (33), patience (38), love of our neighbour (43). In each case He aims at the same thing, requiring of His disciples not the external

[1] Hom. xvi; P.G., LVII, 245. A modern Jew, Rabbi Klausner, also stresses the authority and independence to be found in these antitheses: *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 370. Cp. W. Bousset, art. *Bergpredigt*, R.G.G. (1st ed.), I, 1038: 'This new spirit manifests itself more powerfully in these new antitheses . . . boldly sweeping away all barriers.'

correction of acts, but the interior perfection of the soul. At the end of the section He sums up all that He has just said in the words: 'Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect' (48). The Law prohibited murder and adultery; Jesus forbade hatred and impure desires. And so through all the examples given, He follows up the difference between the two Laws that we have noticed above: the Old Law, written for an infant people, imposes external customs upon its members; the New Law given to men, demands of them virtues of an interior kind. Further, this Law, since it reaches what is most intimate in the human soul, affects the whole man, making demands of every part of his nature in a way that the Old Law never knew.[1] This appears in the matter of murder, in the obligation of reconciliation between brethren, to be made with all speed and before there can be any question of sacrifice to Almighty God (25). Similarly, where adultery is concerned. Here Moses' Law was concerned only with the protection of honour and peace of the home. But the Gospel goes further, laying the duty of purity upon all, whether married or not, and in circumstances of every kind; while polygamy and divorce, sanctioned under the Old Law are prohibited under the New. Our Lord's commandment on this point in the Sermon on the Mount will be repeated later on (Matt. xix, 3–12). To the question: 'Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?' He replies:

> '. . . Have ye not read that He who made man from the beginning made them male and female? And He said: For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. They say to Him: Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce and to put away? He saith to them: Because Moses by reason of the hardness of your heart permitted you to put away your wives. But from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you that whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery.' (Matt. xix, 4–9.)

[1] Cp. Bultmann, *Jesus* (Berlin), p. 86.

So new was this teaching to the Apostles that they exclaimed at once : ' If the case of a man with his wife be so, it is not expedient to marry.' And our Lord replied : ' All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given . . . He that can take it, let him take it ' (10–12).

This incident came much later than the Sermon on the Mount, but it completes it, while it forms an exact parallel with it at the same time. Here we find once more the contrast between the Old and the New Law. To a permission that was really no more than a concession made reluctantly and for a time, Christ opposes His supreme authority once again : ' I say to you ; ' at the same time making it clear that He was going back to the primitive revelation, just as S. Paul connects the Gospel with Abraham, as the fulfilment to the promise. It was useful to refer to this passage of S. Matthew in order to remove the difficulty created by the clause : ' except it be for fornication,' a clause peculiar to S. Matthew and not found in the version either of Mark (x, 10), or Luke (xvi, 18).

We have here a problem of which several solutions have been proposed ; only those being admissible that take into consideration two facts attested by S. Matthew himself. These are first, that Jesus indeed corrected the interpretation of the doctors ; but further that He reformed the Mosaic Law itself, by bringing it into conformity with Almighty God's primitive institution of marriage as an absolutely indissoluble contract : a reform so novel in the disciple's eyes that it appeared to them to be in itself a motive for renouncing marriage and adopting the celibate life.[1]

[1] S. Augustine interprets this clause in the sense that in case of infidelity a man may send away his wife, but that neither the one nor the other has the right to marry again : ' Dominus ergo ad illud confirmandum ut non facile uxor dimittatur, solam causam fornicationis excepit : ceteras vero universas molestias, si quæ forte exstiterint, iubet pro fide conjugali et pro castitate fortiter sustineri ; et mœchum dicit etiam virum qui duxerit, quæ soluta est a viro.' (39. 34, 1248.) In the same sense he quotes S. Paul's text (1 Cor. vii, 10–11) : ' Hanc enim etiam ipse regulam tenuit, et in ea non suum consilium, sicut in nonnullis monitis, sed præceptum Domini iubentis ostendit, cum ait : " Eis autem qui sunt in coniugio præcipio, non ego sed Dominus, mulierem a viro non discedere ; quod si discesserit, manere innuptam, aut viro suo reconciliari ; et vir uxorem non dimittat." ' We find the same interpretation in the second century in Hermas (*Shepherd*, precept, iv, 4–8) ; in S. Justin (*Apol.*, I, xv, 3) and later in other Fathers (see Knabenbauer, collection of texts, *in hoc loco*). This, the traditional interpretation, thus strongly attested and going back to S. Paul himself, supplies a decisive argument not only for the theologian but for the historian as well. Apart from a direct

The three points included in the second group of precepts are no less grave. The abuses of oath-taking (v, 33) formed one of the plague-spots of Judaism, and was a source of scandal even to the heathen themselves.[1] Rabbinic legislation punished false swearing with scourging,[2] but on the other hand the inventive genius of the scribes had surrounded the precepts of the Law (Lev. xix, 12 ; Num. xxx, 3 ; Deut. xxiii, 21–23) with a body of casuistry that perverted the Law more than it explained it. To deceive God and their fellow-creatures, men had come to the point of seeking for loopholes of escape, distinguishing among formulas of apparently equal solemnity those which bound in conscience from others that did not. Towards the end of His ministry, in anathemas against the Pharisees, Christ condemned these abuses afresh. 'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites . . . that say, whosoever shall swear by the Temple it is nothing : but he that shall swear by the gold of the Temple is a debtor . . .' (Matt. xxiii, 15–22).[3]

From this passage we can easily gather what were the abuses that our Lord had in view in the Sermon on the Mount. The Jews feared to perjure themselves when they invoked Jehovah's name, but they had no scruple about doing so when they swore by heaven and earth, or by the Temple. To bring this evil to an end Christ taught that, under whatever different forms, it was the name of God that was invoked, and to which the respect implied in an oath was due. In fact He went further and forbade oaths altogether : a man should be content to reply : 'Yea, yea ; No, no.' Later, S. James was to reproduce this teaching under a slightly different form (v, 12) : 'But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath. But let your speech be : Yea, yea : No, no.' Certain heretics, like the Quakers, taking this prohibition literally, have concluded that an oath was always a sin, even in a law-court. That such a view is false is shown by our Lord's own example, as when He acted on Caiphas' injunction to say in God's name

precept of our Lord, it is difficult to see what influence would have been strong enough, in so grave a matter, to lay down a law so novel and difficult to keep.

[1] Martial, XI, xciv. Cp. Plummer, *Matt.*, 83.

[2] Chebuot, 3, 8 ; Strack-Billerbeck, I, p. 321.

[3] Cp. Strack-Billerbeck, I, pp. 931 ff. and 711 ff. ; Fiebig, *Jesu Bergpredigt, Rabbinische Texte zum Verstaendnis der Bergpredigt* (Goettingen 1924), pp. 63 ff.

whether He was the Christ or not (Matt. xxvi, 63). And S. Paul used an oath in order to strengthen some of his statements (Rom. i, 9; 2 Cor. 1, 23; xi, 31; Gal. 1, 20; 1 Thess. ii, 5). Further, when in the parallel passage to this, our Lord condemns the abuses of oath-taking, He does not forbid the practice in itself. From all of which we may conclude that the ideal would be, if every Christian could content himself with the simple affirmative or negative reply; an end that could be attained if his yes were always yes, and his no always no. Anything more comes from the Evil One.

Our Lord then goes on to oppose the precept of non-resistance to evil to the Old Law of retaliation and revenge. This (v, 38), is one of the most vivid antitheses in the whole Sermon, and one of the most likely to provoke different reactions among those who take it too literally, either regarding it as a challenge to reason or applying it in a way that would make Tolstoi the interpreter of the Gospel. When, in fact, if we penetrate to its true spirit of disinterestedness, devotion and service, we shall find there the true secret of Christ.

The old Jewish legislation imposed the *lex talionis* in case of accidental injury (Exod. xxi, 23–25), murder or wounding (Lev. xxiv, 17, 21), and false witness (Deut. xiv, 18–21). The principal danger of this legislation was that it tended to develop the sentiment of personal vengeance, from which Almighty God often strove to turn away their hearts (Lev. xix, 18; Prov. xx, 22; xxiv, 29), and proclaimed that vengeance belonged to Him alone (Deut. xxxii, 35; Psalm xciii, 1). The author of Ecclesiasticus (xxviii, 1–7) particularly insists on this duty of pardon. Such passages show clearly enough that God was preparing His people little by little to receive the Gospel; none the less, it was a remote preparation, and with even the greater souls of that age we feel that it was the spirit of the Old Testament that they breathed. As an example we may recall David's dying words of advice to Solomon: 'Thou hast also with thee Semei, the son of Gera, the son of Jemini of Bahurim, who cursed me with a grievous curse, when I went to the camp; but because he came down to meet me when I passed over the Jordan, and I swore to him by the Lord, saying: I will not kill thee with the sword. Do not thou hold him guiltless. But thou art a wise man, and knowest what to do with him:

and thou shalt bring down his grey hairs with blood to hell' (III Kings ii, 8, 9). Again, on account of his sufferings and patient endurance of them, Jeremias is justly regarded as a type of Christ; yet he uttered the most frightful anathemas against his enemies: 'Give heed to me, O Lord, and hear the voice of my adversaries. Shall evil be rendered for good, because they have digged a pit for my soul? Remember that I have stood in Thy sight, to speak good for them, and to turn away Thy indignation from them. Therefore, deliver up their children to famine and bring them into the hands of the sword, Let their wives be bereaved of children and widows; and let their husbands be slain by death. Let their young men be stabbed with the sword in battle. Let a cry be heard out of their houses: for Thou shalt bring the robber upon them suddenly' (Jer. xviii, 19–22). Cp. Psalm cviii (*supra*, p. 132).

Leaving detailed discussion aside, we have in the Old Testament two very different series of passages. One, the most ancient, forms the national code, and represents a pitiless legislative system, written for a hard people—the *lex talionis*, in short. The other, of later date, and concerned with the religious training of the Israelites, forbids vengeance and urges the duty of loving one's neighbour; but even so, the Gospel is far off. The idea of 'neighbour' is too narrow, as will appear shortly; moreover the claims of justice are asserted, not indeed in the same spirit of vengeance, but in a tone sufficiently implacable all the same; as in the Psalms and the anathemas of Jeremias. Finally, we must not forget that all such passages, whether earlier or later, were equally sacred, and expressions of the Divine Law; while the ancient formula 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth' stood on the same level as the more recent precepts of Ecclesiasticus or Proverbs. So it is not surprising that Christ recalls them here, to set against them the new laws of the Gospel.

These new laws are announced in what seems at first a paradoxical form: not to resist evil, to turn the other cheek, to let go the cloak to him who has taken away one's coat, to go twice the distance imposed; to give to anyone who asks. It may be asked: Is all this wise or even possible? To understand the matter better, we must observe that from all these positive prescriptions emerges a general attitude or rather disposition of mind. It is this before all else that our

Lord requires of His disciples, and of which He has given us an example Himself. 'I am meek and humble of heart.' If such meekness is extolled in the Old Testament at all, it is in the portrait traced by the prophet of the Messias Himself: 'He was offered because it was his own will, and he opened not his mouth. He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth' (Is. liii, 7). There indeed is the ideal of non-resistance to evil, as it was realized in the Passion itself. And yet when the High Priest's servant gave our Lord a blow, instead of turning the other cheek He answered gently: 'If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil, but if well, why strikest thou Me?' (John xviii, 23). And later, when S. Paul himself stood before the High Priest Ananias, who ordered one of his guards of honour to strike the Apostle, we hear him say: 'God shall strike thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me according to the Law and, contrary to the Law, commandest me to be struck?' (Acts xxiii, 3). And no one could accuse Paul of ignorance or neglect of the Gospel precepts.

So there certainly are occasions when a Christian must defend himself, or rather the interests of which he has charge. S. Paul's conduct at Philippi well illustrates the double duty that these facts imply. Paul and Silas had been beaten with rods, cast into prison, and put in the stocks; but far from defending themselves or complaining in any way, they spent much of the night singing the praises of God. Suddenly, an earthquake shakes the prison, the gates are thrown open, the chains fall to the ground, while the other prisoners make their escape. But Paul and Silas stayed where they were, and the gaoler was so struck with their attitude that he was baptized 'with his whole house.' So far, then, we have non-resistance to evil, and of so striking a kind that the very heathen are touched and converted to the Faith. But there were other duties to fulfil when the honour of the Gospel itself was concerned. The magistrates, alarmed at the turn of events, sent to tell the prisoners that they were free; but they replied to the officers who bore the message: 'They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison. And now do they thrust us out privately? Not so; but let them come and let us out themselves.' And the magistrates, in a fright, made the required amends (Acts xvi, 37–39).

With this passage we may compare that other commandment of Christ's :

> 'But if thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother. And if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more : that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand. And if he will not hear them : tell the church. And if he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican.' (Matt. xviii, 15–17.)

Here our Lord does not require non-resistance of evil of His disciples ; none the less, this precept, like the other, wholly breathes His spirit ; if we have to rebuke a brother, it must be done for love and with his salvation in view.[1]

In a world full of malice and passion, the principle of non-resistance of evil, if imposed indiscriminately in all circumstances upon all the virtuous, would only be an encouragement to wrong-doing on the part of others. The interests of society, and even of the wrong-doers themselves, often requires us to assert and defend our rights. But at least when he is compelled to act thus, the Christian will not push the defence or vindication of his personal interests, but will have in view higher interests that are in his charge, or his neighbour's good ; and so, in whatever measures he may take for his defence we shall find no trace of bitterness, none of the burning anger of the man of vengeance, but that Christian charity that the Apostle describes : '(Charity) . . . seeketh not her own, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things' (1 Cor. xiii, 5–7). And the applications of the new Law suggested by our Lord are understood in this sense. In S. Luke (vi, 29–30), they appear in a somewhat different form : 'And to him that striketh thee on the one cheek, offer also the other. And him that taketh away from thee thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every one that asketh thee : and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.' By the 'coat' is meant a tunic or an 'inside' garment, which is to be given up to anyone who takes away the cloak. S. Matthew gives the reverse order. Really, the passage supposes an action-at-law in which the tunic, the less precious and useful garment, was at stake, and in which

[1] S. Augustine, Serm. lxxxii, 4 ; P.L., XXXVIII, 507.

the defendant was willing also to surrender the cloak, the essential covering of a poor man, which was protected by the Law itself (Exodus xxii, 26, 27).

And here, once more, we may notice the resemblance between our Lord's teaching and that of S. Paul (1 Cor. vi, 1–7) :

> 'Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to be judged before the unjust, and not before the saints. . . . Already indeed there is plainly a fault among you, that you have lawsuits one with another. Why do you not rather take wrong? Why do you not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? But you do wrong and defraud, and that to your brethren.'

It is these last words, recalling those of the Gospel itself, that lend all its force to the reproof that goes before ; that a man should despoil others when he ought to be willing to be despoiled himself! In plain fact, the disinterestedness preached by others is the greatest safeguard of justice itself ; but its efficacy does not stop there. This spirit of devotion, service and forgetfulness of self has always been active in the Church, and has become one of the distinctive marks of the practising Christian. The very maxims themselves which, when taken literally, seem full of paradox to the human mind, have been more than once literally and heroically applied. A well-known example is that of S. John Cantius, who having been stripped of his goods by robbers, and finding afterwards that he still had some gold pieces left, called the men back that they might take away *all* he had. Touched by his action, the robbers were converted to better ways. Such actions may seem a challenge to common sense ; nevertheless it is certain that, when they are inspired by an heroic quality of charity, they are among the fairest fruits of the teaching of the Gospels. It is due to these high examples of the literal and unequivocal practice of our Lord's precepts that the true Christian spirit is kept alive among the faithful at large, even among those who have neither strength nor calling to rise to heights like these.

It is here that S. Luke inserts the 'golden rule' that S. Matthew records a little later at the end of the Sermon. 'All things, therefore, whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do also to them. For this is the Law and the prophets' (Matt. vii, 12 ; cp. Luke vi, 31). This rule

is fundamental in the Gospel. No doubt it was not entirely new. The elder Tobias had said to his son: 'See thou never do to another what thou wouldst hate to have done to thee by another' (Tobias iv, 16). And a similar saying is attributed to Hillel. A proselyte having asked him to teach him, in a word, the whole Law, Hillel told him: 'What you yourself hate, do to no one; that is the whole Law; the rest is commentary.'[1]

There is a world of difference between prohibition and command; and it is one thing to be careful not to inflict upon others the evil that we dread for ourselves, quite another to do them the good that we should wish to have done to us. Besides the Sermon on the Mount was not the whole of our Lord's teaching to His disciples; on the last day of His life He was to tell them:

> 'This is My commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' (John xv, 12–13.)

It was a new ideal, as much higher than the other, as Christ's love for us surpasses our love for ourselves, so that He could say:

> 'A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another.' (John xiii, 34.)

The command to love our enemies (43) shows how far Christian charity ought to extend; regardless of all limits, like the love of our Heavenly Father whose perfection is the ideal model after which we must fashion ourselves. The Old Law commanded the Israelite to love his neighbour as himself (Lev. xix, 17, 18). But the question arises: Who is our neighbour? This is what, later on, will be asked by the doctor of the Law whom our Lord will have reminded of this command; and the parable of the Good Samaritan will be the reply (Luke x, 29 ff.). The passage in Leviticus suggests a narrower definition. 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother . . . seek not revenge nor be mindful of the injury of thy

[1] Schabbath, 31*a*. On this subject Billerbeck (I, 459) remarks that in Palestinian Jewish literature this saying is only found in a negative form. In the twelfth century we find the positive precept in Maimonides (quoted by Moore, *Judaism*, II, p. 87, n. 5).

citizens.' Here the stranger seems to be excluded from this pardon and love ; and, in fact, at Israel's entry into the promised land Jehovah had commanded the people to keep from the stranger, and even to destroy him (Deut. xxiii, 3–6 ; xxv, 17–19). And later on, the efforts of the Jews to protect themselves against the infection of heathenism, whether during the exile, or under the Grecian supremacy, or again in the dispersion, made this isolation still more severe and suspicious in character ; to the very pagans themselves, accustomed to look on every stranger as an enemy, the Jew was the type of a man fleeing from all contact with the foreigner and refusing them every service, even that of showing them their way in the street.[1] The Pharisees carried this tendency even further : forming a little church among themselves, proud of their strict observance and their knowledge of the Law, to them even other Jews were among the ' accursed.'[2]

But Jesus broke down all these barriers and transformed the old commandment ' thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' extending it to all mankind ; for all men are the children of God, objects of His mercy and love, and therefore our neighbours. But we still have enemies. No doubt their number is reduced to a minimum, and we no longer look on all strangers as such, but there are still those that persecute us ; but these, too, must be the objects of our love and prayers.

The example that our Lord sets before us is that of God Himself, of whose fatherly Providence even His worst enemies are beneficiaries. Animating us by a new and sublime spirit of emulation, He makes us ashamed to remain on the level of the heathen man and the publican, and sets before us as the end of our efforts the very perfection of God Himself ; ' Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect ' (Matt. v, 48).

And this sublime commandment is set before us quite simply, with nothing to discourage or frighten us, as we contemplate this goal, so infinitely beyond our unaided strength. Jesus knows that He can help us in this superhuman task. And He does help us ; and the practice of this precept, imperfect, doubtless, yet courageous and sincere, has penetrated Christian life to such an extent that it has

[1] Juvenal, *Satir.*, xiv, 103, 104.
[2] Cp. Strack-Billerbeck, I, pp. 353–68 ; Fiebig, pp. 92–7.

become the characteristic that distinguishes it most. If we were to hear the reproach : ' You are not behaving like a Christian,' our first thought would be that the person addressed was lacking in pity and not loving his enemies as he should. So our Lord's example and command, the heroism of the Saints, the virtue of countless faithful Christians, have raised humanity to a height which had seemed inaccessible. This height is not reached, and still less kept, by all ; but all know that it is there that duty leads and that we cannot deliberately stop short of it, if we are to be Christians in anything but name.

If we wish to form any idea of the difference made by Christianity in this respect, we may remember the attitude of even the best of pagans to their enemies. For Plato, justice consisted in doing as much good to his friends and as much harm to his enemies as possible (*Rep.*, I, 332d) ; and the truly happy man was he who could say on his deathbed that no one had treated his friends better or his enemies worse. This also was Xenophon's panegyric of the younger Cyrus, and Sulla's boast. An honest and naturally good man like Cicero, two years after the death of his enemy Clodius, could date one of his letters ' the 560th day after the battle of Bovillæ ; '[1] and writing to Cassius after Cæsar's murder : ' On the Ides of March,' he says, ' you ought to invite me to dinner ; I would have seen that there was nothing left ' (*Ad. fam.*, XII, iv, 1). Again, Sophocles was one of the noblest representatives of the Pagan world ; yet it is in his pages that we find Agamemnon, in reply to Ulysses' request that he would not refuse to bury Ajax' body, answering amazed : ' *What* do you want me to do ? Do you really mean that you have any regard for an enemy's corpse ? ' (*Ajax*, 1356). In the ancient world much was made of Cæsar's clemency ; and so strongly was this believed in that, when he celebrated his triumph after the subjugation of Gaul, it was thought that he would pardon Vercingetorix, the chieftain who had been his principal opponent there. Everything seemed to urge this step, even the very bravery of his enemy and the long time that had passed—six years since the victory—years of glory and triumph. But he was executed all the same. ' He wanted to give himself up to the joy of his success, and to drink that inebriating cup to the last drop, and could not even conceive perfect happi-

[1] This was the brawl in which Clodius was killed by Milo.

ness unless the joy of vengeance was there. . . . He could imagine no other triumph than those represented on the Egyptian bas-reliefs, with the conqueror's foot on his captive's neck ; or such as we read of in the life of that pupil of Aristotle who dragged one of his most heroic enemies behind his chariot, alive.'[1]

All such facts as these—and the list could be indefinitely prolonged—are summed up in S. Paul's description of the Pagans of his time : without affection, without mercy, ἀστόργους, ἀνελεήμονας (Rom. i, 31). And he could have said to the Romans as he did elsewhere to the Corinthians (1 Cor. vi, 11) : 'And such some of you were. But you are washed : but you are sanctified : but you are justified : in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God.'

IV. Interior Religion.

The sixth chapter of S. Matthew is quite distinct in character from the fifth, and in consequence certain critics have thought it belongs to the Sermon on the Mount only by an artificial link created by the evangelist himself.[2] None the less, so far as the first part of the chapter is concerned (1–12), it represents the same attempt to lead the disciples to justice of a truly interior kind.

Our Lord has been comparing the Gospel with the Old Law in respect of the great precepts of morality, and He now passes on to study the principal works of religion : almsgiving, prayer, fasting. In all these things He would have His disciples to look only to their Heavenly Father from whom they await their reward.

> 'Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them : otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven.' (Matt. vi, 1.)

The principle laid down here by our Lord ought to control our whole religious life. He applies it Himself with regard to three duties which the Jews regarded as the chief practices of religion : almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. Before, however, entering into details, we must consider the principle itself, and we shall understand it better if we consider the

[1] *Ecce Homo* (London, 1866), p. 291. Many of the incidents cited above are quoted and commented upon there.

[2] So Bousset, art. *Bergpredigt*, R.G.G., I, p. 1037.

example of our Lord, whose spiritual life—the model of our own—is formed by His intimate union with His Father, God.

> 'I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.' 'I do always the things that please Him.' 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work.'

No doubt, in the case of Christ this union is of an intimacy which it can never have with us. Our Lord's human nature, united in one Person to the Word of God, is wholly dominated by the Divine Will, and, at the same time, irresistibly drawn to God by the beatific vision that it possessed from the moment that it had any being at all. Clearly, these are unique privileges to which we can lay no claim. Still Jesus did say :

> 'Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.'

And later to His Father :

> 'That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee. . . .' 'That they may be one. . . .'

If we are to make any progress towards this ideal, the first step is to make God the centre of our religious life, for nothing can take us further away from God than the desire to be seen of man. 'If I yet pleased men,' S. Paul would say later, 'I should not be the servant of Christ' (Gal. i, 10). The Christian life is hidden with God in Christ, and it is the secret of this intimacy that Jesus introduces to us here.

Of course, this does not mean that we must banish from our minds all idea of edifying our neighbour : after all, S. Paul himself exhorts the faithful of Corinth to follow his example and to 'please all men' (1 Cor. x, 33) : but he adds : 'not seeking that which is profitable to myself but to many : that they may be saved.' And Jesus Himself had said a little earlier : 'So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works,' but immediately He goes on to say : 'and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' And on this S. Augustine remarks : 'It is plain that here our Lord does not forbid us to do good in the sight of men, but only with the intention of being seen by them' (II, 11, 1270).

'Otherwise you shall not have reward of your Father who

is in heaven.' This is the direct consequence of the attitude that our Lord condemns. If we do not work for God we can expect no reward from Him. Our Lord returns to this idea in each of the illustrations that follow : ' they have received their reward,' He will say of the Pharisees and their imitators. On this question of reward some commentators have expressed themselves as surprised, if not scandalized ; on the ground that it would be better to think nothing of God's reward and to practise virtue for its own sake.[1] At the same time they explain or excuse the allusion by the need of gradually leading imperfect souls to higher things. It must be said emphatically that such Puritanism is contrary to the spirit and teaching of the Gospel. Never has our Lord exhorted us to be indifferent to heaven ; quite the contrary. In the beatitudes He set Himself to show us that virtue is happiness, only we must seek this happiness in God. That is the first word of Christian teaching, and no one who has once grasped its meaning can regard as an imperfection the desire to possess God. Among the various works of religion our Lord takes almsgiving first ; and, in fact, in the Jewish religion itself this duty was held to be in the first rank.[2] It was by prayer and almsgiving that Cornelius the Centurion drew God's graces upon himself (Acts x, 1–5). While in the Talmudic literature it holds a still higher place.[3]

In many places Christ seeks to show His disciples the virtue of almsgiving and more especially when, in describing the Last Judgement, He puts forward as the only motive of the sentence the works of mercy fulfilled by the elect or neglected by the reprobate (Matt. xxv, 34–36). He sets an example in the matter Himself, and in spite of His own poverty and dependence on the charity of others, He caused alms to be given out of the funds of the little apostolic band (John xiii, 29). At the same time He corrects the more serious imperfections of the Jewish Law on the point, commending the giving of alms to all, enemies and wrongdoers no less than others. It is the same lesson that we encountered higher up in the Sermon on the Mount (v, 42 ff.). The teaching of the Old Testament on the point was much narrower.

[1] Plummer, *S. Matthew*, p. 90.

[2] We often find it, as here, associated with fasting and prayer. So Tobias xii, 8, 9.

[3] Cp. Strack-Billerbeck, IV, pp. 536–58 ; Exkurs, 22, *Die altjüdische Wohlthaetigkeit*.

'If thou do good, know to whom thou dost it: and there shall be much thanks for thy good deeds. Do good to the just and thou shalt find great recompense: and if not of him, assuredly of the Lord. For there is no good for him that is always occupied in evil and that giveth no alms: for the Highest hateth sinners and hath mercy on the penitent. Give to the merciful and uphold not the sinner. God will repay vengeance to the ungodly and to sinners, and keep them against the day of vengeance. Give to the good and receive not a sinner. Do good to the humble, and give not to the ungodly: hold back thy bread, and give it not to him, lest thereby he overmaster thee. For thou shalt receive twice as much evil for all the good thou shalt have done to him. For the Highest also hateth sinners, and will repay vengeance to the ungodly' (Ecclus. xii, 1–7).

To see the distance traversed between the Old Dispensation and the New we have only to compare such severe teaching with that of our Lord. '. . . be the children of your Father that is in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad and raineth upon the just and the unjust.'

Similarly, to those who are tempted to look on the merit of almsgiving as something approaching a current account with God, He recalls the fact that this merit is not measured by the sum given, but by the love of which it is the sign.

> 'And Jesus sitting over against the treasury, beheld how the people cast money into the treasury, and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing. And calling His disciples together, He saith to them: Amen, I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury.' (Mark xii, 41–43.)

Now it is another defect that our Lord attacks, namely, ostentation in almsgiving. The description of the hypocrites need not be taken quite literally. It does not appear that the Pharisees actually caused a trumpet to be sounded to announce their almsdeeds, but they did try to make them known. The meetings in the synagogues attracted beggars just as the services in our churches do to-day. The Pharisees found them good opportunities for publicity; as also were the occasions for almsgiving in the open street. All this is

condemned by our Lord as being too much like a 'deal': men gave their alms and got what they wished for in return and must not look for other reward. This is what Christ meant when, throughout the whole chapter, He reiterated the technical term ἀπέχω which means that a payment is received, and a receipt given. But the Christian manages his almsgiving so quietly that his right hand knows nothing of what his left hand does. Here again the expression is figurative, but the sense is clear: 'Hide your almsgiving from your closest friend; hide it in the bosom of the poor,' says the Wise Man (Ecclus. xxi, 15): nay, if possible, let the poor man himself know nothing about it. Indeed, if it could be, you ought to hide even from yourself the good you do, at least conceal its merit from your eyes; always think that you do very little, that you do nothing at all, that you are an unprofitable servant.'[1]

We know what fruits this doctrine has borne, in the admirable modesty of Christian charity; so anxious to help the unfortunate, and so ingenious in finding ways of itself remaining unknown.

The instruction that follows (v. 5 ff.) on prayer, is of still more significance than the preceding. Not only is its subject more important but the exposition is more complete: its main point being the love of secrecy and the avoidance of all display. And in these respects, the precepts concerning prayer are exactly parallel to those that have just been given with reference to almsgiving and those about fasting, that are to follow. Next, are stressed simplicity, and filial confidence in prayer: and these counsels are embodied more precisely in the prayer that our Lord taught His disciples. The last part of this instruction is recorded in a different context by S. Luke, and it is likely enough that Matthew has only inserted them here to complete Christ's doctrine in prayer. It will repay us, therefore, if we study separately the elements thus brought together here.

Christ required His disciples to withdraw into privacy when they contemplated prayer, and we see a fulfilment of this command in the custom of retiring to the upper room which was characteristic of the Apostles and disciples in the first days of the Church (Acts i, 13): and later of S. Paul and his followers at Troas (xx, 8); and of S. Peter at Joppa, 'in the higher parts of the house' (x, 9). In

[1] Bossuet, *Méditations*, 20e *journée*.

the apostolic ministry opportunities for such retirement occurred but rarely: but we find our Lord going apart into a mountain to pray. Once more, it goes without saying that this precept is not to be taken literally or interpreted as meaning that our Lord forbade all public prayer; more than once, He Himself prayed publicly before His disciples and the crowd (Matt. xi, 25; John xi, 41; xii, 28; xvii). But what is forbidden is to pray thus on purpose to be seen by men.[1]

And further, He demands that our prayers should not be a mere repetition of words; which does not mean that we are to avoid all repetition in prayer. Our Lord has taught us differently both by word (Luke xviii, 1–8) and by His own example in the garden (Mark xiv, 39). Only such repetitions must not be superstitious, like those of the heathen, as, for example, those of the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel (III Kings xviii, 26, 27).[2]

[1] This is S. Chrysostom's explanation (Hom. xix, 3. 276): 'What, then, do you tell me that we must not pray in church? Most certainly we may, but with this purity of intention; for in everything Almighty God is attentive to the motive with which we act. You may go into your room and close the door; but if you do so from motives of ostentation, for you the door will not be closed. We must avoid vanity in everything, but in prayer most of all.' S. Jerome finds here a counselling of mental rather than of vocal prayer: 'Hoc simpliciter intellectum erudit auditorem, ut vanam orandi gloriam fugiat. Sed mihi videtur hoc magis esse preceptum, ut inclusa pectoris cogitatione labiisque compressis oremus Dominum, quod et Annam in Regum volumine fecisse legimus: labia inquit, eius tantum movebantur' (I Kings i, 13; P.L., XXVI, 42). The same example is quoted by S. Cyprian, *de orat.*, V. This interpretation is disputable, but at least it may be conceded that Christ recommended not only collective and liturgical prayer but also that offered by the Christian apart and by himself.

[2] In his letter (130) to Proba, S. Augustine explains how prayer can and ought to be prolonged without falling into the vain repetition condemned by our Lord: 'Some people think that to pray for a long time involves a mere multiplying of words; but they are mistaken. It is one thing to talk much, but quite another to pray for a long time. In fact it is recorded of our Lord Himself that He passed the night in prayer, and prayed at length. And what was He doing then if not setting an example to us? In time He prayed when He could; in eternity, together with His Father, He hears our prayer. They say that the brethren in Egypt use frequent but very short prayers, like arrows from a bow, fearing lest the watchful attention so necessary to prayer may be blunted and dissipated, being too prolonged. Similarly, they make it clear that this intention, while it must not be blunted by undue length, must still not be broken so long as it can be sustained. For while prolixity of speech must be banished from prayer, this is not true of length, provided that the intention remains fervent. For to speak much in prayer is to carry out a necessary thing at too great a length. But to pray much is, by our importunity, to urge for a long time that for which we ask. And more often than not this is

And to keep us from this pagan babbling, He adds: 'For your heavenly Father knoweth what is needful for you before you ask Him.' Many difficulties have been raised about this saying of our Lord. If God knows all, and everything happens in accordance with His eternal designs, why pray or, for that matter, do anything at all? This sophism has been refuted at length by Origen, in his treatise on prayer (v). There he shows how our actions are not fatalistically determined by the foreknowledge of God, and how from all eternity God has foreseen our prayers and the response to them that He would give. But apart from this quibble, dictated by ignorance, there is a different argument, raised by many heretics, which the Fathers have thought it worth while to refute. 'God,' it is said, 'is our Father, loving us and knowing our needs. Why then need we lay them bare to Him in prayer?' The answer is that we do not do so to inform Him of them, but humbly to represent them before His face.[1]

To these reasons S. Augustine adds another profounder still. We ought, he maintains, to be prepared for God's graces, and the best preparation is the desire that grows in us through prayer.[2]

accomplished by groaning rather than by speech, by tears rather than by words. And He will take into account our tears and groans who has created all by His word and who has no need of human words' (Ep. cxxx, 10, 19–20; XXXIII, 501–502).

And in this connection we are glad to recall the familiar words of Bossuet on this precept of our Lord: 'Repeat interiorly what will be of profit to yourself, what will stir you to fervour and make you more recollected in Almighty God. The prayers of the heathen who know not God are nothing but ill-considered words. Speak little with the lips and much with the heart. Do not multiply your thoughts, for it is thus that one becomes distracted and befogged. Fix your attention on some important truth which will take possession of your mind and heart. Consider, weigh, savour, meditate, rejoice. Truth is the bread of the soul. You need not, so to speak, swallow each morsel at once; or be passing incessantly from one thought to another, from one truth to another. Hold on to one, hold it in your grasp till it becomes part of yourself; attach your heart to it rather than your mind; draw out of it, as it were, the very sap by the pressure of your attention' (21me *journée*).

[1] 'Quibus breviter respondendum est nos non narratores esse, sed rogatores. Aliud est enim narrare ignoranti, aliud scientem petere. In illo indicium est, hic obsequium. Ibi fideliter indicamus, hic miserabiliter obsecramus' (*Hier.*, xxvi, 42). And similarly S. Chrysostom: '"If," you ask, "He knows what we need, why pray?" It is not to teach Him anything, but to incline Him towards us: it is to draw you near God by the habit of prayer, to humble you, and to remind you of your sins' (Hom. xix, 4. 278).

[2] 'Pulsare compellit. Quod quare faciat, qui novit quid nobis necessarium sit, priusquam petamus ab eo, movere animum potest, nisi

Finally, let us add that prayer is the raising of our mind to God, as we are taught in the catechism itself. Now, as Origen has observed, such an action is very salutary in itself, apart from any results. 'Even,' says he, 'if we suppose that we derive no other advantage from prayer, to recollect ourselves in this way is a great blessing in itself. And those who are assiduous in prayer have had experience of the strength drawn from its practice, enabling us to detach ourselves from sin and to practice virtue' (*De orat.*, VIII). The truth is that prayer is not only a spiritual exercise: it is converse with God, the presentation of a petition to the Most High; but the mere fact of thus presenting our petition and of speaking to Almighty God is an honour and a blessing in itself.

The third application made by our Lord of His general principle of religion concerns fasting; and here, too, nothing is to be done as in man's sight, but in God's. Some of the Pharisees were accustomed to fast twice in the week, on Mondays and Thursdays,[1] a work of supererogation that they loved to parade before God and man, and therefore wore the outward signs of fasting. For among the Jews this was a sign of mourning and affliction, sometimes further expressed by wearing sackcloth and ashes, or refraining from the use of oil and other perfumes.[2]

intelligamus quod Dominus et Deus noster non voluntatem nostram sibi velit innotescere, quam non potest ignorare; sed exerceri in orationibus desiderium nostrum, quo possimus capere quod præparat dare. Illud enim valde magnum est, sed nos ad capiendum parvi et angusti sumus. Ideo nobis dicitur: dilatamini' (1 Cor. vi, 13)' (Ep. 130, 7, 18. XXXIII, 500).

Similarly he comments: 'Ipsa orationis intentio cor nostrum serenat et purgat, capaciusque efficit ad excipienda divina munera, quæ spiritualiter nobis infunduntur. Non enim ambitione precum nos exaudit Deus, qui semper paratus est dare suam lucem nobis, non visibilem, sed intelligibilem et spiritualem; sed nos non semper parati sumus accipere, cum inclinamur in alia, et rerum temporalium cupiditate tenebramur' (iii, 14, p. 1275).

[1] Cp. *supra*, p. 102.

[2] So it was, for example, that Ninive did penance at the call of Jonas: 'And the men of Ninive believed in God: and they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least. And the word came to the king of Ninive; and he rose up out of his throne and cast away his robe from him and was clothed with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published in Ninive from the mouth of the king and of his princes, saying: Let neither men nor beasts, oxen nor sheep, taste anything: let them not feed nor drink water. And let men and beasts be covered with sackcloth and cry to the Lord with all their strength: and let them turn every one from his evil way and from the iniquity that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and forgive

Such outward manifestations were quite legitimate and were accepted by God when they expressed a sincere and religious spirit: but they sometimes tended to take the place of religion itself and to be nothing more than external parade; a fact that called forth protests from the prophets in the name of God. So Isaias (lviii, 2–6): '. . . They ask of me the judgements of justice: they are willing to approach to God. Why have we fasted: and Thou hast not regarded? Have we humbled our souls: and Thou hast not taken notice? Behold in the day of your fast your own will is found: and you exact of all your debtors. Behold you fast for debates and strife, and strike with the fist wickedly. Do not fast as you have done until this day, to make your cry to be heard on high. Is this such a fast as I have chosen: For a man to afflict his soul for a day? Is this it: To wind his head about like a circle and to spread sackcloth and ashes? Wilt thou call this a fast and a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this rather the fast that I have chosen? Loose the bands of wickedness, undo the bundles that oppress. Let them that are broken go free: and break asunder every burden.'

In these verses, as in many others in the last chapter of Isaias, we already hear the tone of the Gospel itself. However, we must not interpret them as meaning that fasting is not acceptable to God. On the first page of the Gospel (Luke ii, 37) we find the prayers and fasts of Anna the prophetess made the subject of praise. Then there is John the Baptist, whose perpetual fast and austerities in general are celebrated in the Gospel; while Jesus Himself has set us an example of a most rigorous fast, and if He does not for the moment lay any such obligation on His disciples, He, none the less, predicts that they will have to fast when He is no longer by their side (Matt. ix, 15). So fasting in itself is not condemned either by the prophets or by our Lord Himself.

Nor must we press in the most literal sense the exhortation that when men fast they are to anoint the head, and wash

and will turn away from his fierce anger: and we shall not perish?' (Jonas iii, 5–9). Similarly when Judas Machabæus and his followers saw the Greeks profaning the city and the Temple, and prepared to march against them, they began by prayer to God in fasting and self-affliction: 'And they assembled together and came to Maspha over against Jerusalem: for in Maspha was a place of prayer heretofore in Israel. And they fasted that day and put on haircloth and put ashes upon their heads: and they rent their garments' (1 Mach. iii, 46–7).

the face.[1] We have here figurative expressions denoting the joy that should radiate from us. And this is useful in two ways; first, it hides our fasting from men so that it is seen only of our heavenly Father, for whose sake it is that we fast and from whom we may look for our reward; second, it lends to this penitential practice the character of a sacrifice made with joy. This is what S. Paul will ask later of his disciples at Corinth in the matter of almsgiving: '. . . every one as he hath determined in his heart, not with sadness or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver' (2 Cor. ix, 7). And it is what we see to-day, in monasteries where the observance is of the most fervent kind: the austerity vanishes in the lovely bloom of joy; of which when the world draws near it breathes the perfume; envies, but alas, cannot reproduce in its own life.

Before leaving this question of fasting, our readers will like to hear what is related of James, the Lord's brother, by Hegesippus, one of the most ancient writers of the Church.[2]

Throughout this description we are conscious of the life of austerity and prayer which the first Bishop of Jerusalem lived. No one would ever think of him as being in conflict with our Lord's precepts which we have just had before us once more. There is not a trace of pharisaism in his whole conduct, but rather a sincere and profound austerity which

[1] On this S. Chrysostom observes: 'When Christ said: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth," He simply meant to recommend discretion and secrecy in almsgiving; when He told us to enter into our chamber to pray, He did not require us to pray in our chamber more than elsewhere, but He is giving us the same advice as before under another form; and it is the same here. If these commands were to be taken literally we should all be unfaithful to them, since it is not our custom to anoint our face when we fast; nor is it with those who may be called the professionals of fasting, the monks, who dwell up there in the mountains' (Hom. xx, 1. 287).

[2] Together with the other apostles, James, the Lord's brother, received the administration of the Church. From our Lord's time to our own he was surnamed the Just, because there were so many who were called James. He was sanctified from his mother's womb; he drank neither wine nor strong drink, nor ate anything that had been killed. The razor had never passed over his head; he never anointed himself and avoided baths. He only was allowed to go into the Sanctuary, for his clothes were of linen and not of wool. He went alone into the Temple, where he would be found on his knees imploring pardon for the people. The skin of his knees had become hard as a camel's, because he was constantly prostrate, worshipping God and asking forgiveness for all. For the rest his outstanding holiness earned for him the title of the Just and Oblias, which means in Greek "rampart of the people and of justice," which is what the prophets testify about him' (in Eusebius, H.E., II, xxiii, 4).

gave him a great influence over the Jews. To them, towards the end of His life, Jesus had said :

> 'Therefore, behold I send to you prophets and wise men and scribes : and some of them you will put to death and crucify : and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city. That upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the just, even unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom you killed between the Temple and the altar.' (Matt. xxiii, 34, 5.)

In the first rank of such sages, scribes and prophets stood out this great man, whom the Jews admired, and yet put to death.

With regard to these three works of religion : fasting, almsgiving, and prayer, our Lord gave His disciples precepts upon which we have commented separately ; but which must now be considered as a whole. For they all spring from the same principle and develop the same tendency in the soul.

Before all, they lay upon us the duty of upright intention and of sincerity. To give alms, pray, and fast to be seen by men, is a religion of hypocrisy, because it tends to substitute external appearance for internal reality ; it is a barren religion, for it does nothing for God and can claim nothing from Him ; it has no object but to be seen of men ; and when it has obtained this result, it seeks no other reward. The more truly Christian we are, the more we shall shrink from a sham of this kind.

But the new orientation given to the spiritual life by our Lord changed its character in the most absolute way. When a man concentrates all his efforts on external practices, his whole life on its moral side comes to depend on them as well, and his good works acquire absolute value, and he has only to unfold them before his own eyes as before that of his neighbour, to see what their value is : so many fasts, so much almsgiving, so many prayers—those were the spiritual accounts made up by the Pharisee in the parable, balancing up his religion as he would his worldly estate.[1] But a

[1] We may recall here, among other passages, the enumeration of the seven kinds of Pharisees : Sota 22b and pal. Berak., ix, 7, 14b ; particularly the Pharisee quizzai [calculating type of Pharisee] who commits a fault and does a good action, which two neutralize each other ; and another nicknamed : " I know my duty and I do it." ' Here is a sin that I have committed,' he says ; ' I must do a good action to balance it.'

disciple of Christ understands that the reality of the spiritual life must lie deeper than its appearances. Good works are its expression, but whether authentic or not cannot be judged by any neighbour or even by the doer himself, but by God alone. And so S. Paul can say with spirit : ' But to me it is a very small thing to be judged by you or by man's day ; ' and then he adds at once : ' But neither do I judge my own self. For I am not conscious to myself of anything. Yet I am not hereby justified : but he that judgeth me is the Lord . . . who will come and both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts. And then shall every man have praise from God ' (1 Cor. iv, 3–5).[1]

Thus understood, religion renders the soul humble and sincere ; still, at the same time, it charges us with an indefinite progress towards an ever higher ideal. If our Christian duties consisted only in exterior practices it would be easy to make a catalogue of them ; and whoever ' filled the bill ' would be free from further obligation of any kind. But if what God demands is perfection of heart, no one can ever lawfully pause in his effort to attain it. Hence all these new demands made by Christ. It is not merely adultery that is forbidden, but evil desires : not only murder, but anger, insults, and hatred of any kind. Clearly it is impossible to make a complete list of these new laws, as could be done with the Old Law. That such a thing could be done was the naïve illusion of S. Peter when, later, he asked our Lord : ' Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him ? Till seven times ? ' And Jesus answers : ' I say not to thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven times ' (Matt. xviii, 21, 22). This was to make him understand that no longer could there be any question of these limits and calculations. Indeed, not content with telling His disciples : ' Unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,' our Lord goes on to bid them : ' Be you therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.' Certain Greek philosophers had set forth as the ideal to be striven after by men : ' Imitate God.' But they knew nothing of the God that they thus proposed as a model, and if they did try to determine some of His attributes, they

[1] Cp. Newman, *Reliance on Religious Observances. Parochial and Plain Sermons*, iv, pp. 1 ff., 68 ff.

pictured Him after their own dreams, and too often after their weaknesses, as well. 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him' (John i, 18). Thence come the limitless demands of the Christian Law; but also the confidence of that final perseverance that it brings. Our heavenly Father, the final end of all our strivings, is also the inexhaustible source of all our strength. Like the Psalmist, and, in a fuller sense than he, the Christian is 'hidden' in 'the secret of His face,' and it is in that profound intimacy that he lives and prays.

V. The Christian's only care.

The religious ideal traced in the few verses that we have been considering is developed in a series of counsels and precepts which we find in the rest of this sixth chapter of S. Matthew's Gospel (19 ff.).[1]

These precepts form a less strict unity than the preceding; but the general idea emerges clearly enough, and is expressed most forcibly in verse 33: 'Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God and His justice.' This must be the great preoccupation of the Christian, whose mind must, therefore, be free from all other cares. Concern for riches is unworthy of him; anxiety for daily bread is a sign of little faith and should only be met with in the pagan world. The Christian, child of the heavenly Father, must have in view nothing but the kingdom of God; and everything else will be given him in overflowing measure by that Father above.

The first verses of the section (19–21) show sufficiently clearly the drift of our Lord's exhortation. He does not condemn riches as an evil in themselves, but only the anxiety to collect and store them up. And the reason He gives shows the end He has in view: 'Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.' The practice condemned here implies a civilization still simple, such as existed in our

[1] The same teaching is found in S. Luke in different contexts (xii, 33, 34; xi, 34–6; xvi, 13; xii, 22–31), where, with other elements, it forms part of the 'journey narrative'; to which, however, it seems to be attached only in a casual way. There is, therefore, no reason here to follow Luke's order more than that of Matthew (cp. Votaw, col. 39). We may ask if such and such a text, for example, 22, 23, was originally part of the Sermon, whether it was added to it by Matthew; but taken altogether, this portion completes and throws light on our Lord's instructions on justice and the kingdom.

Lord's time, in which riches did not consist in credit at the bank, but in objects of value, such as stuffs and costly furniture, which the owner had stored up in his house ; this was his treasure, perishable, and liable to be spoiled by moth and rust. And the house itself is exposed to intrusion of an unwelcome kind. Its bricks, baked in the sun, were easily pierced by a thief. All these details, so real to our Lord's hearers, are only figures of speech to us, but the teaching they contain remains as necessary as ever it was : ' where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.'

In S. Luke these words are connected with an exhortation given to the disciples as a group (xii, 32–34) :

> ' Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom. Sell what you possess and give alms. Make to yourselves bags which grow not old, a treasure in heaven which faileth not : where no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'

It is easy to see the difference between the two passages. In S. Matthew, Jesus counsels His disciples not to lay up treasure upon earth : in S. Luke, to sell what they possess.

This is another passage upon which a charge of Ebionitism against S. Luke has been based.[1] We have already refuted these accusations, which are no better founded here than anywhere else. It is a question of teaching, varying in form with the character of the audience. To all Christians our Lord gives the counsel not to make riches their treasure, or to let them enslave their hearts : to horde riches then, of set purpose, is forbidden to all. But of His disciples who followed Him more closely, He required that they should leave all ; this was already clear from their very calling as Apostles, and the Gospel story supplies further evidence of the fact. But, once more, if, in practice, more or less is demanded, the end in view is always the same, though, more or less perfectly attained ; and that end is freedom of heart. We may here compare the instruction given by S. Paul to his faithful on the subject of marriage (1 Cor. vii, 32 ff.). The Apostle has the same concern as his Master, Christ ; he does not wish to lay upon all the burden of absolute continence, which is voluntary, anyhow ; but he shows them clearly the end to be reached—liberty of heart.

[1] For example, in Wright, p. 200.

He points out the obstacles to this end created by marriage ; and leads everyone to act according to his vocation and his strength. 'No man can serve two masters.' The illustration is drawn from domestic life. A servant cannot be at the disposition of two different masters ; or he will neglect one, better to serve the other. So it is with the service of God and Mammon : we must choose.[1]

'Therefore, I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on.' For it is not enough that we should have set before us the danger of riches ; we must free ourselves from their bondage, and that is the drift of the counsel that our Lord gives here. If we are in any way slaves to riches it is because we feel that they are a necessity, and therefore pursue and cleave to them. Instinctively, we find ourselves asking : 'If supplies fail, what should we do? What shall we eat . . . wherewithal shall we be clothed?' And to cure us of all such cares our Lord points to the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, and, supremely, reminds us of our Father in heaven, who knows our needs and will provide for them.

There is in the whole Gospel no passage dearer to Christians than this ; and none which raises more objections in the minds of men of little faith. Renan, for example, as always explains our Lord's teaching by local influences of climate and customs in Galilee.[2]

To pass judgment on these phantasies there is no need to have lived in the East or to have made an extensive study of archæology ; our Lord's hearers—fishermen, artisans, field-labourers present scarcely a trace of this idyllic life imagined

[1] In the same sense S. Paul would write, later : 'Mortify . . . covetousness, which is the service of idols' (Col. iii, 5).

[2] 'His preaching was mild and gentle, full of nature and the perfume of the fields. He loved flowers and drew some of the most charming lessons from them. Birds, the sea, the mountains, children's games, all in turn had their place in His teaching. . . . The sweet and simple life lived in Galilee bred utter indifference to external things and to the empty superfluities of dress and furniture of which we make necessities in these dour lands of ours. The colder climates, by forcing men to wage a constant warfare with their surroundings, put a premium on the quest for material comfort, while those countries in which human needs are less are the homes of idealism and poetry ; there the accidentals of life are of little moment compared with the sheer pleasure of living. Work in such climates seems useless, involving efforts out of proportion to results. The beasts of the field are better clothed than the richest men, without doing anything at all. By this contempt of external needs, which when not caused by idleness greatly helps to raise men's souls to higher things, Jesus' charming apologues were inspired' (*Vie de Jésus*, p. 175–76).

by Renan ; they were just rough labourers who gained their daily wage by the sweat of their brow, and clung to it, as we may see if we remember the parables of the merciless servant (Matt. xviii, 28), the excuses of those invited to the marriage feast (Luke xiv, 18 ff.) and the joy of the woman at recovering her lost coin (Luke xv, 9). The Sermon on the Mount itself shows all this clearly enough. If Christ attacked avarice so forcibly, more indeed than any other vice, it was doubtless because the lesson was needed by those to whom His words were addressed.

But those who approach the subject from an eschatological point of view have another principle of solution, indiscriminately applied. 'The end of the world is at hand,' is, say they, the burden of our Lord's teaching. Why then trouble to moil and toil ?[1]

Like the preceding, this interpretation is dictated purely by the need of a preconceived theory, without any regard to the actual Gospel text. In this particular discourse Jesus never so much as alludes to any 'imminent end of the social order ;' and if He forbids His disciples to indulge in anxious care, it is not because a great catastrophe is about to overthrow the whole structure of society, and that there is nothing to do but to wait for it to come, but because the Father in heaven will supply all needs. The examples of the birds of the air and the lilies of the field would help to support their trust in God ; and they would see in them not a sign of the end of the world, but a proof of the universal and constant Providence of God.

Once we have disposed of these false guesses, we have no difficulty in grasping the true sense of our Lord's words. Our first care will be not to force them in the interests of a literal exegesis which in reality distorts their meaning ;

[1] 'Envisaging the approaching end of a social order which was beyond preservation or even temporary improvement, Jesus counselled His disciples to endure every conceivable hardship in a spirit of charity and with the expectation of happiness to come. The call to sacrifice everything for the kingdom breathes the same spirit of exacting fervour, and the same can be said of the sense in which almsgiving is here understood. To free oneself from every earthly tie, to withdraw from the moral inconsistencies involved in the care of worldly interests and from the embarrassments created by them, to be without anxiety even for natural needs, such as food and clothing; to leave everything to God after having abandoned everything, to live as freely as the birds of the air, in the love of God and men, to have patience amidst all difficulties and trials, and in death itself, while awaiting the great Coming at the end—here, properly speaking, is all the morality of the Gospel' (Loisy, *Evangiles Synoptiques*, I, pp. 234–5).

here, as always, Jesus speaks the language of His time and people—simple, expressive, full of imagery, capable of engraving religious truths on simple, upright souls; but easily misrepresented by the captious and perverse. Thus some will say: The birds of the air are not all preserved by God, since many die of cold and fatigue. Or again, their needs are infinitely less complex than those of men and we could never get down to their level. This is mere cavilling; if we wish to understand our Lord's words we must mingle with His audience and listen as they listened, not as experts in natural history, but as simple and straightforward men. Our Lord's words recall those of the Psalmist: 'The eyes of all hope in Thee, O Lord: and Thou givest them meat in due season. Thou openest Thy hand: and fillest with blessing every living creature' (Ps. cxliv, 15, 16). 'Who covereth the heaven with clouds, and prepareth rain for the earth. Who maketh grass to grow on the mountains, and herbs for the service of men. Who giveth to beasts their food and to the young ravens that call upon Him' (cxlvi, 8, 9). 'The young lions roaring after their prey, and seeking their meat from God. . . . All expect of Thee that Thou give them food in season. What Thou givest to them they shall gather up: when Thou openest Thy hand, they shall be all filled with good' (ciii, 21, 27, 28). The text upon which we are commenting gives an echo of these songs.[1] But while the Psalmist's contemplation stops at admiring the Divine works and the wisdom and power that they display, the Lord draws from it a lesson of humble confidence in God.[2]

We love to feel breathing through the whole passage our Lord's admiration for the beauties of nature. 'Not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these.' It is like an echo of the Creator's own words when He views His finished work. 'God saw all the things that He had made and they were very good;' but nearer and more moving to us because it comes to us through the human heart of our Blessed Lord. In Galilee, where the Sermon was delivered, the wild flowers have only a passing beauty, but more brilliant than with us. In spring a whole plain will be carpeted with blazing anemones—truly a royal robe, richer far than Solomon's; but in a few weeks they will be

[1] Luke xii, 24: 'Consider the ravens. . . .' Cp. Ps. cxlvi, 9, quoted above.

[2] Cp. L. de Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ*, I, pp. 364–9.

withered and gathered in armfuls by the peasants, to be used as fuel for the earthen pots in which they bake their bread. When commenting on this passage S. Jerome could not help pausing in his rapid literary stride to admire the beauty of these flowers.[1] And S. Chrysostom writes more briefly but even more strongly : ' From Solomon's apparel to the flowers of the field there is all the distance between falsehood and truth' (Hom. xx, 1. 300). And he adds : 'All this beauty is of no immediate purpose : God has spread it abroad among His humblest creatures to show forth His greatness, wisdom and munificence ; can we believe that He who is so lavish towards flowers, will refuse to His children the necessaries of life ? '

' Are not you of much more value than they ? ' That is the thought by which the Christian will be upheld. He will not take the birds and the flowers as his model, but contemplating God's Providence in their regard, he can never doubt it for himself. So it would be an utterly perverse exegesis that would read into this passage any contempt for work or foresight.

> ' For also when we were with you, this we declared to you : that if any man will not work, neither let him eat. For we have heard there are some among you who walk disorderly, working not at all, but curiously meddling. Now we charge them that are such, and beseech them by the Lord Jesus Christ, that, working with silence, they would eat their own bread.' (2 Thess. iii, 10–12.)

But the same Apostle would also write : ' Be nothing solicitous : but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your petition be made known to God ' (Phil. iv, 6) ; and in the same strain S. Peter : ' Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you ' (1 Peter v, 7). It is that same Gospel teaching with both : God wants us to work and earn our daily bread by the sweat of our brow, but He wants that work to be without anxiety, leaving the spirit free and solicitous above all for the kingdom of God and His justice. And our Lord suggests another motive for complete self-abandonment to God,

[1] ' Revera quod sericum, quæ regum purpura, quæ pictura textricum potest floribus comparari ? Quid ita rubet ut rosa ? Quid ita candet ut lilium ? Violæ vero purpuram, nullo superari murice oculorum magis quam sermonis judicium est ' (I, vii, 46).

that is the insufficiency of our methods and our inability to obtain any of the blessings of life except by His favour: 'Which of you by taking thought can add one moment to the length of his life?' Already, in the same discourse, by way of deterring us from swearing by our heads, He had reminded us that we cannot make one hair white or black (v, 36). Now He recalls this dependence of ours in order to induce us to leave everything in the hands of our Heavenly Father upon whom, after all, everything depends. '. . . Neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase' (1, Cor. iii, 7). '. . . After all these things do the heathen seek;' which is tantamount to saying that to be preoccupied with such matters is to be lacking in Faith, which is excusable among the heathen with their knowledge of God, but not among the disciples of Christ.[1]

'For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.' Whenever we indulge in cares of this kind our excuse is always the same—necessity, and it is from this very thing that Jesus draws a motive of trust. 'Yes,' He says in effect. 'You have need and your Heavenly Father knows it. Therefore have no anxiety.'

'Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God and His justice: and all these things shall be added unto you.' What are we to understand by the 'kingdom' here? Surely, treasure in heaven. If our heart is fixed there, we shall indeed have true freedom of spirit and uplifting of heart, nor need we any the more fear the lack of the necessities of life. These will be 'added to' us; so that, after all, they are not so much necessaries as accessories. The only 'necessary' is God Himself, as we find Him in His kingdom and His justice. And to those who are of this mind nothing will be lacking, for God will give all; but to him who follows earthly goods so as to forget heaven, nothing is assured.

One final saying puts the last touch to all this teaching: 'Be not, therefore, solicitous for the morrow: for the morrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is

[1] Further back, to lead us to love our enemies, the Lord had said: 'If you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? Do not also the heathen this?' We have the same comparison here, designed to inspire the same spirit of holy rivalry in the Christian's heart.

the evil thereof.' Here, once more, we see the end that our Lord has in view: liberty of spirit among His followers. 'Be nothing solicitous,' said S. Paul to his faithful, and it is what the Lord said to all.

And this teaching of Jesus was confirmed by the example of His own life. From the moment He began to preach He left all, abandoning it to the Providence of His Father, God. 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests: but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head' (Matt. viii, 20). He required the same self-renunciation of His disciples, and S. Peter had the right to say to Him: 'Behold, we have left all things and have followed Thee: what therefore shall we have?' (Matt. xix, 27). When they were sent out on their missionary journeys they were forbidden to carry anything with them: 'neither staff, nor scrip, nor bread, nor money; neither have two coats' (Luke ix, 3), and He reminds them of this at the Last Supper: 'When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes, did you want anything? But they said nothing' (Luke xxii, 35).

And since then, countless numbers of Christians have, like the Apostles, made proof of God's Providence, and like them have found ample justification for their trust. S. Chrysostom says to his hearers: 'Never think that these commandments of the Lord are above our human strength: for there are many who practice them still to-day. It is not surprising that you are unaware of this. Elias thought he was alone in God's service, but Jehovah told him: "I will leave me seven thousand men in Israel" (3 Kings xix, 18). To-day, too, there are many who live the apostolic life of the three thousand and the five thousand of old. And if we don't believe it, it is not because examples are wanting, but because we are so far from imitating them in our own lives' (Hom. xxi, 42–98). After twenty centuries of Christianity the fact is still more evident than in S. Chrysostom's time.

In the seventh chapter of S. Matthew, the connection between the various sayings of our Lord there recorded is looser than in chapter vi.[1] Still, a comparison with S. Luke makes it clear that a number of these utterances belong to the Sermon on the Mount.

[1] Maldonatus writes sagaciously: 'Ego iam monui non esse anxie quærendam in Evangelistis sententiarum connexionem, quia res non eo ordine scribere voluerunt quo factæ a Christo vel dictæ sunt.'

The first is concerned with our tendency to judge our neighbour (Luke vi, 37–8. Cp. Matt. vii, 1).

> 'Judge not: and you shall not be judged. Condemn not: and you shall not be condemned. Forgive: and you shall be forgiven. Give: and it shall be given to you: good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over shall they give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.'

These few lines, peculiar to S. Luke, paint a vivid picture; we seem to see the small merchant pouring into the receptacle of his client's cloak the good measure, full, pressed down and shaken together, and running over. In S. Clement's first letter (xiii, 2) the same saying of our Lord is recorded in a slightly different and fuller form: 'Do merciful deeds, if you would receive mercy; forgive, if you would be forgiven; as you do, it shall be done to you; as you judge, you shall be judged; in so far as you are good to others, they shall be good to you; with the same measure that you measure, it shall be measured to you again.'

Long before in the Psalms we find a similar thought expressed:

> 'And the Lord will reward me according to my justice; and according to the cleanness of my hands before His eyes. With the holy, thou wilt be holy: and with the innocent thou wilt be innocent. And with the elect thou wilt be elect: and with the perverse thou wilt be perverted.' (Ps. xvii, 25–27.)

It would be anthropomorphism and worse so to press this passage so as to ascribe human passions to Almighty God; all we are to learn from it is, that when justice and holiness are practised by a man, they give him the right to count on the protection of God in due return. In fact, this is what the Psalmist immediately goes on to say: 'For thou wilt save the humble people; but will bring down the eyes of the proud' (28). Here then we have the same thing again: the merciful man can count on the divine mercy. It is the lesson taught by our Lord in the parable of the wicked servant: his master will forgive him an enormous debt, but only on condition that he condones the small amount owed by his brother to himself; and it is the great lesson of the Our

Father, too. S. Matthew does not repeat it here like S. Luke, but contents himself with our Lord's prohibition : 'Judge not, that you may not be judged.' It is a point taken up with great emphasis by S. Paul. 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own lord, he standeth or falleth. And he shall stand, for God is able to make him stand. . . . But thou, why judgest thou thy brother? Or thou, why dost thou despise thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgement-seat of Christ. . . . Therefore every one of us shall render account to God for himself. Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more' (Rom. xiv, 4, 10–12, 13), '. . . he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge not before the time until the Lord comes' (1 Cor. iv, 4, 5). And S. James is equally severe :

> 'Detract not one another, my brethren. He that detracteth his brother, or he that judgeth his brother, detracteth the law and judgeth the law. But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver and judge, that is able to destroy and to deliver. But who art thou that judgest thy neighbour? . . .' (James iv, 11–13.)

In order to be better understood, our Lord has recourse to the illustration of the mote and beam ; and we may notice in passing how popular sayings of this kind, strikingly put, abound in the Sermon on the Mount. 'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth ;' 'If thy right hand scandalize thee . . . ;' 'Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also ;' 'Neither cast ye your pearls before swine ;' etc. And in this case the meaning is only too clear.

S. Chrysostom explains it thus : 'How many men fall into this fault? If they see a monk wearing two garments they rebuke him, confronting him with our Lord's words ; yet they themselves pass their days robbing their neighbours and amassing wealth. If they see him eating well, they bring it against him while themselves continuing to get drunk and make good cheer, forgetting that thus they are accumulating sins and at the same time taking away all excuse from themselves' (Hom. xxiii, 2. 309).

After this precept of charity comes a counsel of prudence, not closely connected with what has just gone before, but acting as a sort of corrective to it. Charity forbids rash judgements, but not due circumspection : the Apostles and

even the whole Christian community have received in trust the holy things, the mysteries of God ; and they must show them proper respect, and not expose them to contempt by laying them before those who are unworthy to receive them. ' Give not that which is holy to dogs. Neither cast ye your pearls before swine ' (Matt. vii, 6). Here again, both precept and example are united in our Lord. When the Jews had begun to take up a malevolent attitude, He continued His instruction only in parables[1] and S. Paul exhorted his disciples to avoid obstinate heretics : 2 Tim. iii, 5 ; iv, 15 ; Tit. iii, 10. Such caution will always be a characteristic of the Church. We find it already in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, ix, 5 : ' Let none eat or drink of your Eucharist but those who are baptized in the name of the Lord ; for on this subject the Lord has said : ' Give not that which is holy to dogs.' And this same concern will inspire the legislation of the *Arcana*, always religiously guarded by the Church, but neglected by the Gnostics, for which they are reproached by Tertullian in these words : ' With them one never knows who is catechumen and who one of the faithful ; for all equally assemble, listen, pray ; and even if heathen present themselves, to these dogs are the holy things given ; to the swine pearls—but false pearls after all ' (de Praescr. 41, 2). In Diocletian's persecution many Christians preferred to die rather than surrender the Holy Scriptures to the heathen. Such prudence is commanded, not only out of respect for holy things, but also, as S. Augustine remarks, in the interests even of those who are thus repulsed.[2] Hence, the touch of mystery found in all the liturgies of the Christian Church. Among the Easterns, the iconostasis hides from the faithful the most sacred part of the ceremonies of the Mass ; with us, all takes place under the eyes of all, but the use of Latin as the liturgical language covers the holy rites as with a sacred veil.

After having recorded Jesus' teaching about prayer (vii, 7–11), to which we shall return later on, and having reproduced the ' Golden Rule ' (vii, 12) on which we have commented above, in this discourse S. Matthew relates our

[1] Cp. Chrysostom, Hom. xxiii, 3. 311.

[2] ' Cavendum est ne quid aperiatur ei qui non capit, melius enim quærit quod clausum est, quam id quod apertum est aut infestat aut negligit ' (ii, 20, 67. 1300).

Lord's last sayings, which form a fitting conclusion to the whole. 'Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction: and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate and straight is the way that leadeth to life,[1] and few there are that find it.'[2] (Matt. vii, 13–14.)

The comparison between the two ways was familiar to the Jews;[3] and to the Greeks as well.[4] What is most worthy of notice here is what is said of the difficulties and the narrowness of the way of salvation. If this be so, what could Jesus have meant when He said that His yoke was sweet and His burden light? 'The answer is,' says S. Augustine, 'that a very few are willing to believe Him or to take the burden upon themselves.'[5] And S. Chrysostom, getting nearer still to the difficulty: 'Even here,' he says, 'if we look carefully at the matter we shall see that the task is light and easy and without undue effort. "But how?" says some one, "is it not a narrow gate and a strait way? . . ." Without doubt, but it *is* a way and a gate . . . men do not stop there, but only pass. . . . So could S. Paul say that tribulation is light, certainly not in itself, but through the courage of those who undergo it and the hope of blessings to come. "For that which is at present momentary," he says, "and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure

[1] We may notice here the absolute use of the word 'life' so frequent in S. John, but rare enough among the Synoptics. As for the expression 'the way that leadeth to life,' it is not found in this form in Hebrew literature, where it appears simply as 'the way of life.' Cp. Dalman, *Die Worte Jesu*, 130.

[2] Cp. Luke xiii, 24, where, however, the setting is quite different. On this occasion Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem, and even the sense of the two passages is not the same. In Matthew the gate of which our Lord speaks is that which gives entry to the Gospel; in S. Luke it is the gate of heaven. Questioned as to whether the number of the elect is small or otherwise, Christ will not solve the problem, but leads His questioner to considerations of a practical kind. The gate of heaven, He says, is narrow, and many will remain outside, and their efforts to enter will be in vain.

[3] Ps. i, 6: '. . . The Lord knoweth the way of the just, and the way of the wicked shall perish.'

[4] We may compare Cebes, *Tabulæ*, 16: 'Do you not see before you a little gate and before the gate a road in which there are not many people, but only a few who pass? It is the road that leads to true knowledge.' Hermas returned to the parable of the true ways, but in a slightly different form (*mand.* vi).

[5] 'Quod iugum lene et levem sarcinam multi respuunt, pauci subeunt, eoque fit arcta via quæ ducit ad vitam, et angusta porta qua intratur in eam' (lxxvii, 1305).

an eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (2 Cor. iv, 17–18)' (Hom. xxiii, 5. 314).

One of the dangers of this narrow way is the presence of false guides who offer their services and need to be unmasked. 'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.' 'By their fruits you shall know them' (Matt. vii, 15. Cp. Luke vi, 43 ff.).

These ravening wolves are those whom our Lord elsewhere denounces in other terms: 'All others, as many as have come, are thieves and robbers: and the sheep heard them not' (John x, 8). And the Christian community, in its turn, has recognized false shepherds and has had to expel them from its ranks. On this subject the *Didaché* gives the following rules: 'Every man who speaks in the spirit is not a prophet; but only on condition that he does the works of the Lord. So it is by their works that we can distinguish the false and the true prophet. . . . Every prophet who teaches the truth without practising what he preaches is a false prophet. . . . If he who comes says unto you in the spirit: Give us money or something else, do not listen to him; but if he tells you to give for others who are in need, let no man judge him' (xi, 8, 10, 12). Similarly Hermas writes: 'Lord, I asked, how can I distinguish one from another, the false prophet from the true. Here, said He, is the rule that I am going to give you to distinguish the true and the false prophet: it is by his life that you will recognize the man that possesses the kingdom of God. Above all, He who has the spirit of God, the Spirit that comes from on high is mild, peaceful, and humble: fleeing from evil and all the vain desires of the world. He puts himself below everyone else: he answers no question nor ever speaks in secret . . .' (*mand.* xi, 7).

We can see from these examples how, from the very beginning, the Church was on her guard against wolves disguised as sheep, and how she applied the rule given to her by her Lord.

'Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the Will of My Father who is in heaven' (Matt. vii, 21).

So Jesus had put His disciples on guard against false prophets and shown them how they are to be known. But

there is a still more deadly error, namely, the illusion that each man may be under as regards himself. Here again, the same rule will apply. The tree is to be judged by its fruits, and if we ask what these are, we are told they are the fulfilment of the Father's Will. All the rest is nothing, and vain protestations of fidelity such as 'Lord, Lord' are so many words. And our Lord warns us that at the Last Day it will still be according to this rule that we shall be judged. Prophecies, exorcisms, miracles will go for nothing; and Christ will know only those who have done the Will of His Father upon earth.[1]

In the prophetic picture traced by our Lord here, we notice the part that He claims for Himself, that of universal judge. At this decisive moment of the Last Judgement the sole hope of men will be in Him: to be known by Him will be eternal life: not to be so known, damnation.

This prerogative of being Judge of the World was not an attribute of the Messias as conceived by the Jews.[2] In fact He appears nowhere as Judge except in the book of Enoch,[3] and there He does not *alone* act as universal Judge. In fact this passage in the Gospels is one of those most clearly in advance of the Judaic theology. But in the New Testament it does not stand alone.[4]

After these grave warnings, our Lord urges His hearers to carry out His teaching in their daily lives. Those who were wise enough to do so would be building on the Rock. Rain, floods, violent winds might arise; but nothing can shake them. On the other hand, those who heard His words without putting them into practice were building their house upon the sand. The flood would carry it away and it would fall in ruins (Matt. vii, 24–27; Luke vi, 47–49). Later on, Christ was to resume this same teaching under another form. Then He would compare His words to a

[1] Similarly it was to forewarn them against illusion that later He would tell His Apostles fresh from their missionary journey: '. . . rejoice not in this that spirits are subject unto you: but rejoice in this that your names are written in heaven' (Luke x, 20).

[2] Cp. Volz, *Jüdische Eschatologie*, pp. 259 ff.; Bousset-Gressmann, *Religion des Judentums*, pp. 257 ff.; Strack-Billerbeck, I, 978; II, 465; IV, 1095, 1100, 1104.

[3] Cp. Strack-Billerbeck, IV, 878.

[4] Votaw, art. *Sermon on the Mount*, *D.B.*, V, 43b; cp. Matt. xxvi, 31–46; x, 32 ff.; xi, 27–30; Mark viii, 38; Luke xx, 18; John v, 27; xii, 48; Acts xvii, 31; Rom. ii, 16; 2 Cor. v, 10. On this whole question cp. *Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, pp. 283 ff.

seed. If it falls on rocky ground it will spring up rapidly, but if it fail to take root, a day's sun will be enough to dry it up. How often will the Master meet these souls, utterly devoid of depth, charmed and touched by His words, believing themselves to be His disciples when it only needed the slightest adversity to overthrow their feeble faith! Yet, it depended upon themselves to acquire the strength and depth of which they stood so much in need; and, in His words recorded here, our Lord shows them the way. Only let them practise the teaching they have received; by their own efforts, inspired and sustained by Grace, the Gospel will penetrate their whole being: it will be for them no longer an object of curiosity, but a rule of life.

Here, as so often, S. James echoes our Lord's words as recorded by the synoptics.

> 'But be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if a man be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he shall be compared to a man beholding his own countenance in a glass. For he beheld himself and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was. But he that hath looked into the perfect law of liberty and hath continued therein, not becoming a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work: this man shall be blessed in his deed.' (James i, 22–25.)

In S. John also we find our Lord affirming that good works are necessary to Faith, but again in a slightly different form: 'If any man will do the Will of Him, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself' (vii, 17). The practice of God's Will then gives the soul the discernment which otherwise it would lack, and which is necessary to recognize the Divine teaching. In the discourse that we have been studying, the necessity of practice is as strongly affirmed, not now, it is true, in order to be able to discern religious truths in the first instance, but to retain them when once they have been acquired. By generous application, good habits must be formed and take root; and then the seed will not be burned by the first ray of the sun, for its roots are deep; the house will not be demolished by the first storms, for its foundations are firm; they rest upon the rock, and the rock is Christ.

VI. Conclusion

At the end of this discourse S. Matthew notes the impression made on the audience: 'the people were in admiration at His doctrine; for He was teaching them as one having power: and not as the scribes and Pharisees' (vii, 28, 29). The preaching at Capharnaum had already produced a similar impression (Mark i, 22; Luke iv, 32). It was the first awakening of Faith through contact with the Gospel; and now, face to face with a revelation more explicit and more authoritative still, the effect was truly profound. Here is the impression of one author among many, that of an historian who, while he did not share our Faith, had closely studied its written sources, not without being deeply moved: 'We have before us here, behind the whole community that bears His name, the great figure of Jesus Christ. And we gain the impression that never, perhaps, as here, in the first and most powerful of His discourse, has that figure been presented with all its qualities of austerity, strength and greatness, with its asperities and vivid antitheses of character and teaching. Like great blocks of fantastic shape, presenting themselves to each generation as an enigma and affecting it like a shock, His words and claims are here massed before us, difficult and obscure.'[1]

This impression was sincere enough, but it betrays the reader who comes to the study of the Gospels as a stranger to the Faith of Christ. Anyone who has entirely surrendered himself to that Faith and is therefore endeavouring to plan his life according to Christ's Law, will find true happiness there. It is not that custom has dulled the force of these sayings or quenched their fire. But there is a glowing fire that burns with a peaceful flame. It is with no trembling of voice or dismay of spirit that so sublime a revelation is made known; here is no stammering voice like that of the greatest prophets, Moses, Isaias, even S. Paul, who fall back in confusion when they try to put these ineffable mysteries into words.

For Christ such mysteries do not belong to a far-off world, to those 'foreign islands' spoken of by S. John of the Cross, but rather to His native land, His family abode. When we

[1] Bousset, art. *Bergpredigt*, R.G.G. (1st ed.), I, 1039.

are introduced by the Son into the mysteries of God we are not dazzled or crushed : the Heavenly Father's Providence, His constant care for the least of His children, the attention He bestows on their prayer, and above all, the intimacy with Himself to which He invites them to live with Him in secret, like two friends together ; here are matters that could be revealed to us only by the Son Himself, and then in a manner so simple and assured.

And in this full light of God, life appears as one, all transparent and sincere. There is no sharing its allegiance, for ' no man can serve two masters.' No more external constraint, no more tolerance of attitudes outwardly correct which only serve to mark the falsity of the soul. We must keep ourselves not only from murder, but also from vindictiveness and hate ; from adultery, but no less from evil desires. The place of an oath will be taken by permanently guaranteed truth of a Yes that is Yes and a No that is No. There will be no more limit to fraternal love, which will extend to all who are reached by that of the Father in heaven. ' Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.' ' Strait the way and narrow the gate,' but whosoever sets out to follow Christ, whoever suffers for His Name, will find in this very suffering an undreamt-of happiness, and will glimpse through the narrow gate itself the shining of the Eternal Light.

Here we already have new revelations, full of paradox to our human ideas, such as freedom through total renunciation, death in life, happiness in the midst of tears. But all this has nothing of the false paradox of the Stoics, and savours nothing of the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus. All is peaceful, humble and sincere, never wounding the heart of good-will, but penetrating it, making it expand and filling it with God. The Sermon on the Mount is not our Lord's last word ; rather it is an introduction to the teaching of the Gospel. In this account of Christian morals, with its ideal, its duties, and its rewards, Christ, as yet, makes no mention of His Church, and keeps even Himself in the background nearly all the time.[1] Only by the authority of His words does He reveal Himself,[2] but this authority is sovereign and to the upright and attentive mind a revelation in itself. It comes out especially in the line followed by our Lord in

[1] Cp. S. John Chrysostom, P.G., LVII, 240, 269, 301, 320.
[2] Ibid., 245, 301, 327.

which He constantly stresses the contrast between the Old and the New Law: 'You have heard that it was said to them of old . . . but I say to you' (v, 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43). And equally its significance is felt in the statement in the beatitudes: 'Blessed are ye when they shall revile you . . . for My sake' (v, 11) and in the description of the Last Judgement: 'And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you. Depart from Me, ye that work inquity' (vii, 23). For a man to sacrifice his life to Christ is to be happy for ever; to be disowned by Him is to be damned.

It was in this way that our Lord revealed Himself to the great mass of His disciples. No doubt in the course of the Gospel we shall find many more express declarations than these. But if we examine them closely we shall find that such revelations as these were made to a few chosen hearers, or called forth by discussions with opponents, Pharisees for example, or scribes. With the ordinary run of His disciples, our Lord proceeded slowly and prudently, first instructing them in the practice of the Law, making them know and love their heavenly Father better, and revealing Himself, little by little, day by day, as the supreme Lawgiver, as the Revealer of the Father, as the Master whose cause calls for every sacrifice and ensures every reward, as the Judge who will decide the happiness of all. And to anyone who had followed Him to that point, it would be easy enough to know and accept the truth.

CHAPTER VI

PREACHING AND MIRACLES BY THE LAKESIDE

I. The Centurion from Capharnaum. The Widow of Naim.

'AND when He had finished all His words in the hearing of the people, He entered into Capharnaum. And the servant of a certain centurion who was dear to him, being sick, was ready to die' (Luke vii, 1, 2; cp. Matt. viii, 5).

This is the first time that we encounter a centurion on the Gospel page.[1] These officers commanded a century, that is, a unit of from fifty to a hundred men, according to the strength of the legion to which they belonged. They were old soldiers, risen from the ranks; and the vine-stalk, the symbol of their authority, was their marshal's *bâton*. They could not rise any higher in the military hierarchy, so that their social rank was something like that of non-commissioned officers. Their position, humble enough in the metropolis, was more independent and important in the provinces, something like that of subordinate officers in the French colonial corps, who act as commanders of small military stations in the colonies.

In those provinces which were administered by procurators, the Roman army consisted only of auxiliary troops, not legions; and it was the same with the garrisons of Palestine up to the time of Vespasian.[2] These auxiliary troops were raised in the country itself, but, in Judea, entirely among the non-Jewish population. So we must not imagine the officers and soldiers encountered by our Lord as genuine Roman citizens; for the most part they were Syrians or Arabs, but trained after the Roman model. We

[1] It has been noticed that these officers always appear in the Gospels in a favourable light. At the Passion the centurion who presided over our Lord's execution cried: 'Indeed this was the Son of God' (Matt. xxvii, 54). The first Gentile to be converted was the centurion Cornelius (Acts x); and when S. Paul was led to Rome the chief of the escort, the centurion Julius, showed himself very friendly indeed (Acts xxvii).

[2] Cp. Schürer, I, 459.

may further remark that Galilee was not under the direct government of the Romans, but under the tetrarch ; and the centurion of Capharnaum was in his pay.

The method of recruiting the army of occupation was not without its effect on the relations between the Jewish population and the troops. These, representing the pagan element in the country, were often in conflict with the Jews ; and the bloody conflicts that broke out in all the coast towns, on the eve of the great rising, reveal the latent animosity that kept Jew and pagan in a constant state of opposition. However, among these soldiers thus settled in the Jewish towns, there were some who had been won to the religion of Israel. They remained Gentiles, uncircumcised, separated by an impassable gulf from the born Israelites, but still attracted by their faith and worship. This was the case with the centurion Cornelius at Cæsarea, and also with the centurion of Capharnaum.

We are reminded here of the story of Naaman the Leper. The young Israelitish slave, who was in his wife's service, said to him : ' I wish my master had been with the prophet that is in Samaria. He would certainly have healed him of the leprosy which he hath ' ; and Naaman sets out to find Eliseus, and was in fact cured by him (4 Kings v). In somewhat the same way the centurion, still, be it remembered, a pagan, had heard of Jesus. A beloved slave was dying : and if the prophet so willed, he could be cured. As a pagan, he did not dare take the requisite step himself ; but friends would do it for him. He was a benefactor of the Jewish community at Capharnaum ; so its leaders took the matter in hand, and several of them went to find our Lord. ' He is worthy that Thou shouldest do this for him. For he loveth our nation and hath builded us a synagogue.'[1]

So our Lord set out and, on drawing near the centurion's house, He met some of that officer's friends, who bore a message from the officer himself. ' Lord,' it ran, ' trouble

[1] In his *Politique tirée de l'écriture sainte,* Book I, Art. 6, ' *de l'amour de patrie,*' Bossuet recalls this story to prove that ' by His doctrine and example Jesus made clear the love that citizens ought to have for their country.' ' They recognized Him as a good citizen, and it was a strong recommendation with them that He loved the Jewish race. The senators of the Jewish people, to oblige Jesus to restore to the centurion a sick servant who was dear to him, fervently besought Him saying : " He is worthy that Thou shouldest do this for him. For he loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue." And Jesus went with him, and the servant was cured ' (Ed. Lachat, xxiii, 509).

not Thyself: for I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof . . . but say the word, and my servant shall be healed'—a moving and touching prayer that the Church herself has borrowed, and put on the lips of all her children. We shall understand the centurion's modesty better, if we remember that he was a Gentile. He knew enough of Jewish customs to be aware that an Israelite could not enter a Gentile's house without being defiled. But in his humility he goes further still. According to S. Luke, he did not dare approach our Lord Himself, but sent his humble request through his friends. And if his humility was great, no less admirable was his faith. 'Say the word, and my servant shall be healed.' Chrysostom (Hom. xxvi, 1. 334) writes: 'Notice that this man, like the leper, knows who Christ is. He does not say: intercede, pray, implore; but: command. And fearing that through modesty Jesus will not be willing to do what He is asked, he adds: "For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers: and I say to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doth it."' And the holy doctor contrasts with this the imperfect faith of Martha, betrayed in her remark: '"I know that whatsoever Thou shalt ask of God, God will give it Thee." And the Master, not too pleased, replies: "I am the resurrection and the life. . . . Believest thou this?" But here, there is no need of such insistence. At His first word, the poor pagan is raised to the confession of this sovereign power, which imposes its will on the servant's disease and compels obedience by a word. And our Lord replies with admiration: "Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith, not even in Israel."'

Our Lord is full of wonder and surprise. 'The surprises of life,' writes Swete, 'especially those which discover in it new moral or spiritual aspects, call forth a genuine astonishment in Christ's human mind.'[1]

[1] Plummer (*Matt.*, 126) refers to this text and adds: 'Those who attribute omniscience to the Incarnate Word must explain how He could "marvel" at anything.' There is a misunderstanding here. Our Lord's astonishment fits in very well with the knowledge that Catholic theologians agree in attributing to Him. In addition to the beatific vision and infused knowledge, Jesus also had an experimental and acquired type of knowledge, in which there was a real development and progress. So the facts that He learned day by day could, by their fresh contact with His mind, produce in Him wonder and surprise. (Cp. S. Thomas, III^{a}, Q. 12; J. Lebreton, *Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, p. 589).

Seeing such a marvellous faith in a pagan, when so many Jews, in this very town of Capharnaum, remained incredulous, our Lord adds :

> 'And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven : but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' (Matt. viii, 11, 12.)

The Jews loved to represent the kingdom of God as a triumphal feast (cp. Luke xiv, 15) where the Israelites would sit at table beside the patriarchs, while the heathen, covered with confusion, would remain in outer darkness at the door.[1] And in His parables our Lord willingly has recourse to this image of the feast ; but here He sets Himself to show that the presumption of the children of Israel is mistaken, and that the parts will be reversed. It is faithful Gentiles who will find a place by the patriarchs' side, while the Jews, the sons of the kingdom, will be cast out of the festal hall into the exterior darkness. Thus, at the very beginning of His public ministry, our Lord gives us a glimpse of the defection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentile world.[2]

From Capharnaum, S. Luke (vii, 11) takes us to Naim, where our Lord is to raise a widow's son from the dead. This moving story certainly bears the stamp of S. Luke's authorship, not only in its use of characteristic expressions, but especially in the spirit of tender compassion so vividly reproduced. In his Gospel, women play a prominent part ; but it has no incident more likely to arouse sympathy than that of this poor woman on the way to bury her only son.

The little town of Naim is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible. It is situated in Galilee, on the northern slope of the Little Hermon, about five miles to the south-east of Nazareth. At the present day it is a hamlet of about a hundred and fifty inhabitants, all Mohammedans. Its name (Naim : meadows, pasturages) marks its position halfway up the mountain, dominating the plain. It is reached

[1] Cp. Strack-Billerbeck, IV, pp. 1154 ff.

[2] Cp. Meinertz, *Jesus und die Heidenmission*, pp. 88 ff. S. Luke does not record these menacing predictions of Christ, but inserts them in an eschatological discourse pronounced by Him when contemplating faithless Jerusalem (Luke xiii, 28, 29).

by a solitary path, following the contour of the steep slope, and which had therefore become the only entry into the village in our Lord's time. A ten-minute walk on the road to Endor brings us to the little cemetery, that is, to a few tombs hollowed in the rock.[1] We can easily imagine the meeting of the two groups in the story: on the one side, the funeral procession leaving the village; and, coming in the opposite direction, Jesus with His disciples and a following crowd. The corpse would have been borne uncovered—the mother following, at the head of the procession, and then, behind her, his relatives and friends and the hired mourners.

Telling the mother to cease her weeping, Jesus touched the bier and, addressing the dead man, said: 'Young man, I say to thee, Arise.' Mercy and omnipotence, every element of our Lord's miraculous deeds, is depicted there as with a few strokes. We have three distinct narratives of raising from the dead in the Gospel: this one, peculiar to S. Luke; the raising of Jairus' daughter, recorded by all three synoptics (Matt. ix, 18–26; Mark v, 21–43; Luke viii, 40–56); and the raising of Lazarus, in S. John. In these three great miracles, our Lord's attitude is the same: that of one who has the right to command. No doubt in all His miracles of healing, and in such wonders as the Feeding of the Five Thousand, we can recognize the same sovereign power; but nowhere is it asserted so imperiously as when face to face with death. On this occasion, Christ stopped the procession, saying to the dead man: 'Arise'; to Jairus' daughter the same words, at the same time taking her hand; while before Lazarus' tomb, He caused the stone to be taken away and uttered the command: 'Lazarus, come forth.' Before this last miracle, He had said to Martha: 'I am the resurrection and the life.' Each of these miracles proclaims that one truth.

If we wish to understand their significance better, we may compare them to the raising of the two widows' sons ascribed in the Old Testament respectively to Elias (3 Kings xvii, 17–24) and Eliseus (4 Kings iv, 18–36). No doubt these are great miracles; but there is a world of difference between them and their Gospel counterparts. Elias and Eliseus were faithful servants of Jehovah, but they were only servants; and while their supplications obtained these

[1] Dalman, *Itinéraires*, p. 257.

great prodigies from Almighty God, it was only at the cost of superhuman efforts and much prayer. This is most apparent in the second narrative. In the first place, Eliseus was unaware of the trouble that had fallen upon the Sunamitess, and of the favour that she had come to ask. Then he gave his staff to Giezi, with instructions to lay it upon the child's face ; but this first attempt failed. Then he went himself to the child, lay upon him, and only succeeded in restoring warmth to his flesh. After a turn or two in the house below, he began again, and with great difficulty life returned, and the child opened his eyes.

Now let us read the Gospel stories again. Here are no fumbling attempts, no laborious efforts, only brought to fruition through perseverance and toil ; no supplications. One word suffices, and that is a command : ' Young man, I say to thee, arise.'

And yet, if certain critics are to be believed, all these incidents are no more than a reflection of the Old Testament.[1] But there is not a shadow of probability in the idea that, working on these models, Luke would have surpassed them to such a striking extent, and especially that he would have been able to ally such power with such mercy and simplicity. A man, seeking by an effort of imagination to make his subject surpass the wonder-workers of the Old Testament, might have invented some portentous and dazzling miracle like those of the apocryphal writers ; but he could neither have conceived nor reproduced a deed of wonder so simple and natural, so Divine and so human at the same time.[2]

[1] So Pfleiderer (*Urchristentum*, I, 427) sees in the story of the centurion at Capharnaum an imitation of that of Naaman ; and, in the event at Naim, a reflection of the widow of Sarephta, or of the Sunamitess. On the other hand, Klostermann (*S. Luc*) regards these narratives as inspired by Grecian stories ; for example, the marvels attributed to Apollonius of Tyana (Philostratus, IV, 45) ; a pointless comparison. Cp. Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ*, II, 219–22 and 464–70.

[2] Abbott (E.B., II, 1804), to discredit the testimony of this miracle, has imagined another solution, even more improbable : in the apocryphal book known as the Fourth Book of Esdras (ix, 43), there is mention of a woman who had a son after thirty years of barrenness ; she brought him up to manhood, yet saw him die on the very day he was to be married ; she bewails herself : ' there is a vision of a woman (Sion) sorrowing for the death of her only son (the City or Temple). Christians would assert that Christ (John ii, 19) raised up the Temple, or, in the language of Christian psalms and hymns, that he raised up the only son of the sorrowing widow, thus the possible influence of symbolism combines with other causes to

II. S. John the Baptist's Message.

The reader will remember that it was John the Baptist's imprisonment that decided Jesus to leave Judea. The Precursor's captivity and death have also been related by Josephus, and it will be of some interest to quote from his account (A.J., XVIII, v, 2, 116–119). Speaking of Aretas' expedition against Herod, and of Tiberius' intervention, he writes :

'Accordingly Tiberius gave these instructions to the proconsul of Syria ; but many among the Jews thought that Herod's army had been stricken by God, and that he himself had been justly punished for his treatment of John, called the Baptist, whom Herod had put to death. He was a good man, who preached to the Jews exhorting them to practise virtue, to be just to their neighbour and pious towards God, and to receive baptism ; the utility of this rite in his eyes being, not that it washed away sins, but secured the purity of the body, since the souls had been already purified by righteousness. The people gathered round him, and almost the whole population was moved by his words, so much so that Herod was afraid that he would use his influence to draw them into some seditious movement ; since it seemed that, at his suggestion, they were ready to do anything whatever. So the tetrarch judged that it would be better to anticipate any action on John's part, and to suppress his activities before he attempted something

oblige us to reject, as non-historical, Luke's account of the raising of the widow's son.'

Loisy (*Synoptiques*, I, 655–657), has improved upon this supposition, to make it a little less improbable : 'The desolate widow represents the daughter of Sion, Jerusalem, threatened with the loss of Israel, her only son, and losing him, in fact, in order to recover him miraculously by the power of Christ. Thanks to Him, the promises of God are not vain, and the mother who bewailed her dead son was permitted to see him alive again.' The impression produced by this miracle has in itself an allegorical value. 'It is not so much the raising to life of a young man at Nain, as the birth of Christianity itself, the fame of which was so conspicuous in Judea and beyond.' It is quite easy to grant that the propagation of Christianity made a greater impression than the raising of that young man to life, and one may well admit that the former is a much greater miracle ; but what proof against the historicity of the miracle can one draw from that ? Is it not evident that this raising from the dead, performed before so many witnesses, both the followers of Jesus, and the friends and relatives of the widow, must have had an enormous celebrity throughout the whole country ? There is no need to make use of an allegorical interpretation to account for so plain a fact.

on a large scale, rather than risk a revolution and fall into difficulties which he might have reason to regret. Acting on these suspicions, Herod had John arrested and lodged in the fortress of Macheron, of which we have spoken above, and there had him put to death. The Jews thought that the defeat of his army was a punishment for this deed, and that this was God's way of punishing Herod.'

No doubt Josephus here interprets S. John's *rôle* as a religious reformer inaccurately enough, probably understanding it very imperfectly himself. Perhaps, too, he wished to make it more intelligible to his pagan readers, just as, for their benefit, he assimilated the Pharisees to the Stoics, and the Sadducees to the Epicureans. But this very lack of understanding is itself a guarantee of authenticity, and it is certainly interesting to glean this testimony from a man so far removed from Christianity. It shows us how the exalted virtue of the Precursor had impressed his fellow-countrymen, even those who had not been directly affected by his action.

From this account, too, we learn the scene of John's imprisonment and death, a point upon which the evangelists are silent. According to Josephus, Macheron was the place. Although to-day the palace, fortress and the village itself are destroyed, visitors are still impressed by this wild and terrible spot.[1]

[1] Cp. *R.B.*, 1909, 386–97; Edersheim, I, 659, following Tristram, *The Land of Moab*, 255–65. 'An avenue of upturned stones marks the ancient Roman road leading to Macheron. On a group of undulating hills are ruins covering a square mile; these are Macheron itself; where we can identify the remains of a temple dedicated to the Syrian Sun-god. Then, crossing a narrow and deep valley about a mile broad, we climb the other side of a conically-shaped hill, on which stood the ancient fortress, covering altogether more than a square mile. The key of the position was the citadel, built at the eastern extremity of the fortress; occupying the summit of the cone, it was isolated and almost impregnable, but quite small. From its height of some 490 feet, and only about 325 feet in diameter, it dominated the rest of the fortress. The foundations of the encircling walls were still visible, rising four or five feet above the level of the soil. Inside, everything is in ruins, and there is nothing to see except a well of great depth, a cistern with vault still intact, and two dungeons, one below the other. The outer walls are almost without chink or crevice of any kind; and in the masonry can still be seen little holes, where the iron or wooden bolts were fixed. It was there that, for six months, was confined this son of the desert, the herald of the kingdom of Heaven, whose coming was at hand.' Looking around him, the traveller may see the Dead Sea, more than 4000 feet below, and, as the crow flies, not more than four to five miles away; and, beyond it, the mountains of Judea, Hebron, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and the desert and the Jordan, whose white line is lost on the horizon, towards the north. On the plateau on the other side, just at the foot of the citadel, stood Herod's palace.

No great effort of imagination is needed to follow the Precursor and his disciples in their life inside the prison. While John was still free, preaching and baptizing at will, his disciples could not without some resentment watch the first successes of our Blessed Lord : 'Rabbi,' they say, 'he that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou gavest testimony : behold, he baptizeth and all men come to him' (John iii, 26). What must have been their feelings now, when they saw their master a prisoner in this dungeon, and remembered that, down there in pleasant Galilee, another Master was preaching and drawing the multitude to Himself? And when, in one of their visits to the scene of His labours, they saw Jesus sitting with His disciples at meat with the publicans, they were disgusted, and their resentment found vent in open protest (Mark ii, 18). All such feelings were human enough and easy to understand ; but it has been asked whether they affected John's disciples only, or whether their master, embittered by his captivity, shared them, too. Tertullian thought so. According to him, the Holy Ghost, when He rested upon Christ, abandoned John.[1] This strange conception of the translation of the Holy Spirit is peculiar to Tertullian, and without authority. Nor can the actual theory of doubt on the part of John the Baptist claim much better support.[2] Patristic tradition, taken as a whole, has rejected it.[3]

[1] 'Ipso iam Domino virtutum Sermone et Spiritu Patris operante in terris et prædicante, necesse erat portionem Spiritus Sancti, quæ ex forma prophetici moduli in Ioanne egerat præparaturam viarum Dominicarum, abscedere iam ab Ioanne redactam scilicet in Dominum ut in massalem suam summam. Itaque Ioannes iam communis homo et unus iam de turba scandalizabatur' (*Adv. Marc.*, IV, 18).

Similarly in *De Baptismo* (X) : 'Ergo non erat cæleste quod cælestia non exhibebat, cum ipsum, quod cæleste in Ioanne fuerat, spiritus prophetiæ, post totius spiritus in Dominum translationem usque adeo defecerit, ut quem prædicaverat, quem advenientem designaverat, postmodum an ipse esset miserit scisciatum.'

[2] Fouard—who rejects it himself—attributes this view to 'some Fathers,' and, besides Tertullian, quotes S. Justin as among those who hold it. This is an error. In *Quæstiones ad Orthodoxos* (Q. 38, P.G., VI, 1284 ; cp. lxxxvii, 1329) we read : 'John sent his disciples that he might inform himself whether this wonderworker was He to whom he himself had borne witness, or someone else who was being made much of by the people.' This is an interpretation which, if not more probable than that of Tertullian, is by no means identical with it. For the rest, the *Quæstiones* are not by S. Justin at all, but an anonymous compilation much later and destitute of authority.

[3] S. Hilary writes on this passage (ix, 978) : 'Ioannes detentus in carcere Dominum ignorat ? et propheta tantus Deum suum nescit ? Atquin venturum ut præitor nuntiavit, consistentem ut propheta agnovit,

However, many present-day scholars see, in this message of John, evidence of a doubt as to our Lord's mission. Perhaps the most powerful statement of this view is that of Reuss (*Théol. Chrét.* I, 143–5) : 'From his dungeon, John the Baptist,' he writes, 'sent his disciples to ask Jesus if He was the one that was to come, or if they were to look for another. Great pains have been taken to colour this fact and to dispel the shadows that seem to have fallen on what is otherwise so brilliant a figure. And yet the explanation is simple enough, so long as its explanation is not left in prejudiced hands. . . . John the Baptist remained a Jew after all; and as such looked for a solemn and glorious inauguration of the kingdom that he had announced with such devotion and enthusiasm; and in his dungeon he fretted at the delay. We have the less need to find excuses for him, such as have been invented by others, since we should be the last to reproach him for not being otherwise than Providence had wished him to be.' And further on (145) : 'Did he understand the reply that his disciples brought to him? We are not told, and we dare not say that he did. He had indeed seen the Messias, and was even sure that he had seen Him. He had brought low the mountains before His steps; he had worked with zeal to increase the number of the citizens of His kingdom; he might even have discovered around him the first signs of the mustard-seed already sprouting from the ground; but his eyes, dazzled by the glory of a picture that was only an ideal, could not see the light, apparently less bright, that was to disperse the cold darkness of an age-long night; they were closed by the headsman's axe, while they were ever searching the horizon for the sunrise, without having noticed

adeuntem ut confessor veneratus est. Unde tam variæ et tam abundanti eius scientiæ error obrepsit? Sed consequens de eo Domini testimonium sentiri hoc ita non sinit. Neque sane credi potest Spiritus Sancti gloriam in carcere posito defuisse, cum Apostolis virtutis suæ lumen esset in carcere positis ministraturus.'

After explaining that the Law sends its faithful to the Gospel he goes on : 'Tali igitur Ioannes exemplo, non suæ, sed discipulorum ignorantiæ consulit : ipse enim venturum in remissionem peccatorum prædicavit. Sed ut scirent non alium a se prædicatum ad opera eius intuenda discipulos suos misit : ut auctoritatem dictis suis illius opera conferrent, neque Christus alius exspectaretur, quam cui testimonium opera præstitissent.'

This passage is interpreted in the same sense by S. Jerome in his commentary (P.L., XXVI, 69) and in his letter to Algasia (*Ep.* 121, 1. P.L. XXVI, 1008), and by S. Chrysostom (P.G., LVII, 413). Cp. Buzy, *S. Jean-Baptiste*, pp. 298 ff.

the thousand drops of shining dew which, two paces from his prison, already heralded the spring-time and the dawn.'

This is a brilliant passage, but it may be questioned whether it faithfully interprets the psychology of John. We do not think it does ; one can hardly represent the Precursor as fascinated by apocalyptic dreams, and blind to the Gospel's light. Of all the evangelists, the one who knew him best was his former disciple, S. John ; and we remember the picture he draws of him by Jordan in the early days, when, seeing Jesus pass, he told his disciples : 'Behold the Lamb of God ; behold who taketh away the sin of the world.' And a little later, near to Ennon, when his jealous disciples rather disparagingly pointed out to him the growing success of the new Master, he replied : 'He that hath the bride is the bridegroom : but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.' He did not ask then for a sign in heaven, nor for the cataclysmic inauguration of the kingdom. He had reached more intimate realities : sins purged by the Lamb of God, the union of Christ with Israel, or rather with the growing Church, and he rejoiced over all this, and his joy was full. Claiming nothing for himself, aspiring to nothing better than self-effacement, he remained, as in the beginning, humble and austere ; but this austerity was softened by contact with Christ, and breathed the joy that the Gospel alone can give.

Are we to believe that so luminous a faith became clouded as he lay in prison ? That the depression consequent upon the long and hard captivity, the inaction, the discouragement, and the bitterness of his surroundings had told upon him so much that he fell away, as Peter and the other Apostles fell away during our Lord's Passion ?

Such a defection is possible ; but it needs proof, and this is not to be had. And more than this, the reply given by Christ to John's messengers, and the eulogy with which He followed it up, show His singular regard for His precursor ; He made common cause with him, and did not speak as if He thought of him as wavering in his testimony to Himself.[1]

But, if John was guilty of no defection, it may be asked if there were not at least some impatience in his attitude on this occasion. That is possible. L. de Grandmaison has

[1] Cp. Lagrange, *L'Evangile de Jésus-Christ*, p. 155.

justly reminded us (*Jésus Christ*, I, p. 301, n. 3) that 'certain actions of our Lord had caused astonishment, not only to His adoptive Father, but also to His Mother herself' (Luke ii, 48–50). The messianic ministry developed according to a plan dictated by a wisdom wholly Divine, which, during our Lord's life, often disconcerted the Apostles themselves. Even on the first Ascension Day, we find them asking if He is not going to restore the kingdom to Israel at last. No doubt the Precursor's faith was far in advance of that of the Apostles; but it is easy to imagine him impatient to contemplate the great scene of the Judgement foretold by him, with the Messias, fan in hand, thoroughly cleansing His threshing-floor. Why may we not believe that, in his prison at Macheron, John felt something of the impatience that the Martyrs felt, which later his own disciple John, shut up in Patmos, was to express in the cry of grief: 'How long, O Lord (Holy and True), dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?' (Apoc. vi, 10).[1]

But we may also explain John's message as due solely to his care for his disciples' faith, and this seems to us the most probable view. Some time before, he had sent his disciples to Jesus with the single sentence: 'Behold the Lamb of God!' leaving it to our Lord Himself to complete the work that he had begun. Similarly, on this occasion, he was content to send them to Him, and the message with which he charged them will supply an opportunity for them to see Jesus close at hand, and for Him to make Himself known. S. Chrysostom has put forward this explanation with all the power of skilled analysis that is so especially his (Hom. xxxvi, 1, 2. 413). The Precursor had done his best to reduce the opposition of his disciples to Jesus, and, feeling that his end was near, he did not wish to leave them in their state of stubborn hostility and suspicion. But so far, his exhortation had been in vain, and his statements on the subject put down to his excessive modesty. Nothing remained, therefore, but to wait until reports of our Lord's miracles began to spread, and then he sent to Him not all his disciples, but two specially chosen for the purpose; charging them with an inquiry which would compel them to listen and

[1] This interpretation has been defended under various forms by Le Camus, *Vie de N. S. Jésus Christ*, I, pp. 451–2; Lagrange, *S. Luc*, p. 214; *L'Evangile de J.-C.*, p. 154; Schanz, *S. Matthieu*, etc.

observe. And our Lord entered into His Precursor's plans, and instead of replying to the questions of his messengers by a simple affirmation, such as: 'I am he that should come;' He referred them to His works: 'Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen,' and to show them that He could read what was in their hearts, He added: 'Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me.'[1]

This reply of our Lord is full of significance for ourselves. To-day too many, with their half-knowledge of Christ, are asking the same question: 'Art Thou He that art to come, or look we for another?' And to them, as to John the Baptist's representatives, our Lord gives signs by which He may be known: in other words, His miracles. It was the same lesson which was given at Capharnaum when the paralytic was cured:

> 'But that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He saith to the sick of the palsy): I say to thee: Arise. Take up thy bed and go into thy house.' (Mark ii, 10, 11.)

And very often, in S. John, we find our Lord repeating it, as, for example, after the cure of the paralytic at the pool of Bethsaida:

> 'But I have a greater testimony than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to perfect, the works themselves which I do, give testimony of Me, that the Father hath sent Me.' (John v, 36.)

But nowhere is there a more striking example than here. He to whom the reply of Jesus is addressed, is the noblest fruit of Judaism: 'there hath not risen among them that are born of woman a greater than John the Baptist.' In his person is summed up all Israel's religion and all its hope; and, to a deputation with such authority behind it, He must give a definite reply, and present the credentials of His mission on earth; and with this end He points to His mighty deeds: 'the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them.' This enumeration of messianic works occurs in identical terms in Matthew and Luke; Luke,

[1] Cp. Buzy, loc. cit., pp. 298 ff.; Archbishop Goodier, *The Public Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (London, 1930), I, p. 251.

however, prefixing them by a few words not found in Matthew :

> ('And in that same hour, He cured many of their diseases and hurts and evil spirits : and to many that were blind He gave sight.') (Luke vii, 21.)

Commentators of the radical school have been much embarrassed by this narrative, and especially by our Lord's reply. Thus, Loisy brushes aside S. Luke's remark just referred to with the words : 'This account is an addition to the original text : it is a veritable interpolation' (I, 662). So far as the reply itself is concerned, he admits that the Evangelists understood it in its literal sense ; 'It matters little whether the terms employed in Isaias are symbolic or not. Neither Matthew nor Luke understood them of miracles in the spiritual order, but of palpable facts' (663). But this, he thinks, is a wrong interpretation : 'the very purpose of the reply invites us to distinguish between the sense in which it was intended by Jesus Himself, and that which the evangelists read into it' (ib.). 'Putting aside the setting supplied by the redactors, Jesus' words can easily be understood of the spiritual fruits of the Gospel preaching ; and the reply sent to the Baptist is what we should have expected of our Lord. He could perfectly well have uttered the words attributed to Him in S. Matthew's version : "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen." And what the Baptist's disciples were hearing and seeing, at this moment, was not a profusion of miracles, but the method of teaching followed by our Lord, and its effect on the crowd who followed our Redeemer, an unhappy band who might well be called blind and deaf, lame and leprous, and dead to God through sin. Cured of their spiritual infirmities, they would take their place among the poor to whom the promises of the kingdom were made' (664, 665).[1]

This interpretation is a surprising one. We are told that passing witnesses, like S. John's messengers, could not have heard and seen this profusion of miracles ; and are we to believe that it would be easy for them to judge in a moment the moral state of our Lord's hearers, to guess their past, to know that they were dead in sin, and that our Lord's words had restored them to life ? Surely it would have been incomparably easier for them to report, either from their own

[1] Cp. Reuss, *Histoire évangélique*, p. 297.

observation or from the conversation they heard, those physical miracles that Jesus multiplied around Him wherever He went.[1]

These miracles of the Messias had been predicted by Isaias :

> ' Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened : and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free.' (Isaias xxxv, 5, 6.)
>
> ' The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath appointed me. He hath sent me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach a release to the captives and deliverance to them that are shut up.' (Isaias lxi, 1.)

Our Lord reminded S. John's messengers of these prophecies, at the same time connecting them with Himself, and stressing the messianic character of the miraculous works that He was performing under their very eyes.

There was enough light there to enlighten those who were seeking the light at all ; yet many, far from being guided, would be injured by that very light. For these, our Lord could see a stumbling-block ahead, and it was of these that He said : ' Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me.' Here He follows the same method that we have noted so many times before. To those who seek Him in good faith, He makes Himself known with the sure proof of His Divine mission : but He never forces Himself upon the obstinacy that would reject Him.[2]

And now the messengers had gone, and, if it be asked whether they were convinced by what they saw, we can only say that we do not know. Perhaps their master would complete the work begun by Christ. At any rate it is certain that, for a long while yet, there would still be disciples of John who refused to follow our Lord. While the messengers were present, Jesus said nothing about His Precursor, perhaps not

[1] Plummer very justly writes (loc. cit., 203) : ' It is clear, not only that Luke and Matthew understand Jesus to refer to bodily and not spiritual healings, but that they are right in doing so. John's messengers had not " seen and heard " Christ healing the spiritually blind and the morally leprous.'

[2] Cp. Sanday, *The Life of Christ in Recent Research :* ' The reply that he (the Baptist) received is enough, but not a word more than enough ; nothing is added to satisfy what we might consider a reasonable curiosity, But at the same time the significant hint is given, Blessed is he that shall not be offended in Me.'

wishing to appear to flatter him. But now they are gone, and, among those present, no doubt more than one still retains the impressions left by this strange embassy. Has John, they ask, begun to doubt, and if so, what is to be thought of him, after all ?[1]

To disperse these clouds, our Lord uttered a magnificent testimony to His Precursor, recorded by both evangelists in almost identical terms :[2] even retaining our Lord's exact form of expression, so vivid and so familiar to ourselves. Memories of John in the desert were still fresh, and Jesus revived them by His insistent questioning of those present. ' What went you out into the desert to see ? ' There were the reeds shaken by the wind, growing thick on Jordan's banks ; but was it this that the people had gone out to see ? Certainly, John was no reed ; he, the terrible preacher who went to Herod to rebuke him for his incestuous life. And the men clothed in soft raiment ? All our Lord's hearers knew them well, and often saw them in the neighbouring town of Tiberias. We may recall, for example, Josephus' story of Herod Agrippa's death, with the prince parading in a robe of silver, which dazzled all eyes under the rays of the rising sun, while the mob exclaimed : ' It is a god and not a man ' (cp. Acts xii, 21). Was it a spectacle of this kind that they had gone into the desert to see ? Most certainly not ; for such people are found only in palaces ; while who did not remember seeing John with his leathern girdle ? Why, then, did they press around him ? It was because he was a prophet ; nay, more than that, he was the Precursor foretold by Malachias of old. And in quoting this prophetic testimony, not only did Jesus do justice to John, but at the same time He made clear who He Himself was ; He, whom the Baptist had heralded and had prepared his way before Him. ' Amongst those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.' Many commentators have found a difficulty in this passage, especially when taken in conjunction with the following words : ' He that is lesser in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.' Yet, if the context be taken into account, the meaning seems sufficiently clear. John was a prophet and more than a prophet, and, as such, he was above all prophets before

[1] Chrysostom, *in hoc loco*.

[2] The only difference to be remarked is, that when comparing John with the great men of the Old Testament, Luke mentions the prophets by name, while Matthew is content with a more general formula.

him : the comparison not turning directly on sanctity, but on ministry and on the comparative *rôles* assigned by God to the ancient prophets and the Precursor himself. Not only was he alone the herald of the Messias, but he had been sent before Him to prepare His way. None the less, this ministry, august though it be, is only preparatory to the kingdom, and consequently the faithful of the kingdom are more privileged than John ; by their supernatural calling, they are nearer to Christ, and more intimately united to Him. Here, as above, the comparison is not based on virtue, but on privilege, and on graces gratuitously given.

And from the Precursor, our Lord's thoughts turn to those who have followed Him, and who have listened to His word (Luke vii, 29 ; Matt. xi, 12 ff.). Before the baptism of John, the faithful are divided into two camps. The despised classes—the poor and the publicans—were susceptible to his teaching and were baptized in crowds ; while those who seemed to be the cream of society, Pharisees and lawyers, held aloof. So the first glorified God, while the others nullified His merciful designs. It is only what the story of our Lord's own life was to show afresh : the publicans and sinners preceded the Pharisees into the kingdom of God.

Thank God ! these despised ones are the great majority ; as our Lord Himself could say : 'the kingdom of God is preached and every one useth violence towards it,' this last expression being parallel to that in S. Matthew : 'the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent bear it away.' We must not from this text draw the moral lesson that it is necessary to do violence to enter heaven ; nor, on the other hand, see in it any condemnation of those who thus take the kingdom by force. It is better to keep to the sense implied in S. Luke ; i.e., that the impulse supplied by John is so great that crowds are pressing against the strait gate of the kingdom, to such an extent as to seem ready to force an entry. This was the impression experienced by our Lord when, trembling with joy (Luke x, 21), He saw before Him the crowd of poor to whom God had revealed the Gospel, and for whose sake He blessed His Father in heaven. This was a joy beyond all others, and was experienced by the Apostles, too, more than once, softening for them the rebuffs endured so often from those who ought to have been more than all others accessible to the Gospel.

This movement towards the kingdom marks the beginning of a new era, 'from the days of John the Baptist'; and our Lord's words stress this division of time: 'All the prophets and the law prophesied until John.' The whole Old-Testament dispensation was prophetic in character, and this was the goal towards which it moved.

What follows is introduced by our Lord as a mystery that can only be received by some. 'If you will receive it, he is Elias that is to come,' by which expression Christ obviously did not mean that the truth here revealed can be accepted or refused at will, but that it was not a thing that could be understood by everybody. So He goes on: 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.'[1]

'But whereunto shall I esteem this generation to be like? It is like to children sitting in the market-place. Who, crying to their companions, say: We have piped to you, and you have not danced: we have lamented, and you have not mourned. For John came neither eating nor drinking. And they say: He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking. And they say: Behold a man that is a glutton and a wine drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners. And wisdom is justified by her children.' (Matt. xi, 16–19.)

'And the Lord said: Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? And to what are they like? They are like to children sitting in the market-place and . . . saying: We have piped to you, and you have not danced: we have mourned, and you have not wept. For John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking wine. And you say: He hath a devil. The Son of Man is come eating and drinking. And you say: Behold a man that is a glutton and a drinker of wine, a friend of publicans and sinners. And wisdom is justified by all her children.' (Luke vii, 31–35.)

The general sense of the parable is quite clear. The Jews are like disagreeable children, who spoil each others' play and stand aloof from everything, niggardly both of laughter

[1] S. Jerome observes (72): 'Hoc quod dictum est "si vultis recipere, ipse est Elias" mysticum esse et egere intelligentia, sequens sermo Domini demonstrat, dicens: "Qui habet aures audiendi, audiat." Si enim planus esset sensus, et manifesta sententia, quid necesse fuit nos ad illius intelligentiam præparari?'

and tears. Almighty God has spared no efforts to convert these stubborn souls, like a hunter who spreads his nets on both sides to seize the coveted prey.[1] The Pharisees in their bad faith and obstinacy have repelled these loving advances, but there are others who have given Almighty God His due : and wisdom has been justified by her children.[2] It has been questioned whether the ' wisdom of God ' is to be taken here in a personal sense, and it must be, if we share Rendel Harris' view that, under this title,[3] our Lord was speaking of Himself. However, his proofs are weak, and it is more natural here to understand the Providence or the Wisdom of God which His children glorify, while others make His plans of no effect.

These children of Wisdom are : first, the Apostles,[4] then, in a more general sense, all who have in any degree responded to the appeal of John the Baptist and of Christ Himself; for it is especially to the humble and poor that the mysteries of the kingdom have been revealed. So S. Matthew connects this passage with the curses pronounced on the towns of the Lake upon whom our Lord's ministry and miracles had had no effect, and then with the hymn of praise addressed by Christ to His Father, whose providence enlightens the humble and leaves the proud in their blindness of heart. On the other hand, Luke relates the whole incident at the end of Christ's ministry in Galilee (x, 13–15 ; 21, 22) ; and we will reserve our own comments until we are dealing with this period.

III. The Woman that was a sinner.

After S. John the Baptist's message to our Lord, S. Luke relates the conversion of the woman who was a sinner (vii, 36–50). Since he gives no indication of date and place, and since the other evangelists are silent as to the whole incident, we are reduced to conjecture on these points. As Capharnaum was then the centre of our Lord's ministry, it has been supposed that it was there that this ' woman who was a sinner ' sought our Lord, and as the evangelist places this narrative in juxtaposition to that of the Precursor's message,

[1] S. John Chrysostom, 423.

[2] Or by her ' works ' (ἔργων instead of τέκνων). This variant is preferred by Tischendorf, Hort, Von Soden, Vogels, Joüon.

[3] *The Origin of the Prologue of S. John's Gospel*, 59–62.

[4] S. Jerome, 73.

it is thought that the one event was closely followed by the other. But these are conjectures ; probable enough, but of little real importance. The story contains its lesson in itself. S. Luke's Gospel is the gospel of mercy ; but this is one of the most touching of all the incidents that the evangelist records. On one occasion, when S. Gregory the Great set himself to expound it, he told his hearers : ' When I contemplate this penitence of the Magdalen, I want to weep and hold my peace.'[1] Every commentator must feel the same emotion as S. Gregory, but, like him, he goes on with his exposition all the same.

Our Lord had been invited to dine with a Pharisee. It was not the first time that He had received and accepted a similar invitation ; two other incidents of the same kind are recorded by S. Luke himself (xi, 37 ; xiv, 1). In both these instances the host showed little sympathy or regard for his guest : the first was scandalized because Jesus omitted the usual ablutions ; the second, because He cured a man sick of the dropsy on the Sabbath Day. Here, too, the Pharisee seems more occupied in spying upon his guest than in entertaining him. Perhaps, like Herod, he was anxious to see this wonder-worker near at hand ; perhaps he wished to pose before the people as the protector of the new prophet that had arisen ; perhaps he was influenced by some motive of a deeper and more religious kind. We do not know ; but in any case his lack of consideration was evident, and Jesus lost no time in making him aware of the fact.

In Palestine, where the feet are only protected by sandals and easily get covered with the dust of the road, it was the custom to wash the feet of guests. Our Lord Himself, at the Last Supper, made a point of personally rendering this humble service to His Apostles ; but the Pharisee did not

[1] Hom. xxxiii ; P.L., LXXVI, 1239. S. Gregory adds : ' Hanc vero quam Lucas peccatricem mulierem, Ioannes Mariam nominat, illam esse Mariam credimus, de qua Marcus septem dæmonia eiecta fuisse testatur.' This question of the identity of the woman that was a sinner, of Mary Magdalen, and of Mary of Bethania has been often discussed ; we shall return to it later on when we speak of the anointing of our Lord at Bethania. Without claiming to settle a question so complicated and obscure, we cannot help thinking that the scene at Bethania recalls this one and suggests the identity of the woman who on these two occasions rendered this homage to our Lord. Cp. Simon, *Prælectiones biblicæ, N.T.*, I (1924), pp. 336–8 ; Lemonnyer, *Mélanges Grandmaison, R.S.R.*, 1928, especially p. 109. In the opposite sense, U. Holzmeister, *Die Magdalenenfrage in der kirchlichen Ueberlieferung. Z.k.T.*, XLVI (1922), pp. 402–22, 556–84 ; Lagrange, *L'Evangile de Jésus-Christ*, pp. 159–61.

trouble about the matter at all. Neither did he give our Lord the kiss that was the usual welcome for a guest or a friend ; that sign of friendship which Judas would, later, give to Jesus as the means by which He should be recognized by His foes. Another custom was to anoint the guest's head with oil, a custom reproduced in Egyptian paintings[1] and clearly alluded to in the Psalmist's words (xxii, 5). 'Thou hast prepared a table before me against them that afflict me. Thou hast anointed my head with oil ; and my chalice which inebriateth me, how goodly is it!' . . . This sort of anointing was that commonly practised, oil being plentiful in Palestine. If it were wished to honour a guest in a more special way, it was usual to pour precious perfumes upon his head, as Mary of Bethania would later on. But the Pharisee neglected everything of the kind. However, ignoring the fact for the moment, our Lord took His place at the table. Like the other guests, He reclined on one of the couches by which the table was surrounded, half raised on their left sides, and with their feet stretching outward.

During the meal, a woman came in. Access to oriental houses is easier than to ours ; but it was a bold step all the same. We know how rigorously the Rabbis kept themselves from all contact with women, in public at least,[2] and this one, more than others, might expect a rebuff, for she was known in the town as a woman of evil reputation. However, the Pharisee let her be, being anxious to put his guest to the proof, and in this pre-occupation forgetting the rigidity of his principles for once. It is easy to guess the woman's purpose in coming. No doubt she had heard the Master, and, touched by His words, had come there to render Him homage in the sight of everyone, and to show Him and others her resolution to change her mode of life. When she found herself close to Him, her emotion became too strong to be restrained and, putting down for a moment the vessel she had brought, she burst into sobs, bedewing His feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair : then, judging herself unworthy to pour the perfume on His head, she confined herself to anointing His feet.[3] She felt descending upon her the whole weight of the contempt of the Pharisee and of the other guests, but she never gave it a thought ; on His part,

[1] *D.B.*, I, 100. [2] *Supra*, p. 69.
[3] Cp. Origen, *in Mat. comm. ser.*, 77.

Jesus kept silence, seemingly ignoring her humble homage, which she continued to render all the same.

But soon the Master Himself broke the silence. As on many other occasions, He was conscious of the murmurs of His enemies, and replied to them. In deference to the head of the house He asked his permission to speak, and when this was given with a courtesy somewhat distant and restrained, our Lord set before him the parable of the two debtors. Then came the pregnant question: 'Which, therefore, of the two loveth him most?' And with a condescending negligence the Pharisee replied: 'I suppose that he to whom he forgave most.' 'Thou hast judged rightly,' replied our Lord, going on at once to apply the parable to the woman, and at the same time, by contrast, bringing out the negligence of His host. Up to that moment He had apparently observed neither the one nor the other; but now He repeats every detail of what had occurred:

> 'I entered into thy house: thou gavest Me no water for My feet. But she with tears hath washed My feet; and with her hairs hath wiped them. Thou gavest Me no kiss. But she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint. But she with ointment hath anointed My feet.' (Luke vii, 44–46.)

This is He who, at the last day, will recall to all, elect and reprobate alike, all things that they have done in His service, or left undone, receiving the astonished reply: 'When did we see thee hungry and feed thee?' or 'When did we see thee hungry . . . and did not minister to thee?' Then will be the moment for the Judge's final sentence, but to-day there is still time for the kindly warning of the Saviour of men. Simon is covered with confusion; but what joy for the penitent! She had come thinking only of Christ, and leaving everything in His hands—her reputation, her sins, her wishes for the future, her very soul. For His sake she has defied the prejudices of all these guests, who would have overwhelmed her with their contempt; yet she has no sense of triumph at our Lord's words. She rejoices simply, forgetting the censorious faces around her, and thinking only of the Saviour who accepts her homage and acknowledges her love.

There has been much discussion of our Lord's words: 'Many sins have been forgiven her, because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, He loveth less:' the real point being whether the woman's love is to be regarded as the cause of her pardon, or as its effect.[1] Perhaps it is not really necessary to oppose the two interpretations to each other: no doubt, the woman was first led to her action by her admiration for and devotion to our Lord; she wanted to do Him an act of homage, but no sooner did she find herself at His feet than her contrition began to compete with her love, and, bursting into sobs, she bathed our Lord's feet with her tears and then wiped them with her hair. To see in all this merely an expression of gratitude to one who had pardoned her, would be too narrow an interpretation, and Christian piety is not at fault in seeing here the true model of repentance. And our Lord's reply puts His sanction on this interpretation: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee;' 'Thy faith hath made thee safe. Go in peace.' Her love merited her pardon, and pardon, so mercifully granted, redoubled her love.

Yet, as in the case of the paralytic, those present were scandalized at what had taken place. 'Who is this that forgiveth sins also?' To this attack, our Lord makes no reply, but instead He said to the woman: 'Thy faith hath made thee safe. Go in peace.' It was in this way that Christ often dismissed the sick whom He had cured; and in the present case He shows clearly the sense in which His words are to be taken. The salvation He has bestowed is above all that of the soul. And so the Church makes her

[1] If we take the parable alone into account, we should say that the remission of the debt came first, and gratitude followed; so that, if we suppose an exact parallelism of ideas, we should consider all these proofs of love given by the sinful woman as expressions of gratitude for pardon already obtained; according to this theory, she entered the dining-hall already pardoned, and our Lord's final words: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee' only confirm the remission of sins already granted to her. We might then translate: 'Sins in great number have been forgiven her, and for this reason she has loved much.' This interpretation is sponsored, for example, by Buzy (*R.B.*, 1917, 184–188). Others translate: 'Sins in great number have been forgiven her *because* she has loved much.' For these writers, the woman's love is not the fruit of the remission of her sins, but its meritorious cause. We must therefore admit a certain flexibility in the application of the parable, which is often the case. It is taken in the above sense in the Vulgate and by most Catholic commentators (e.g. Knabenbauer), who find here an example of perfect contrition, the source of pardon.

priests repeat His words whenever they absolve in the Sacrament of Penance.

The other guests of Simon the Pharisee were scandalized at our Lord's action in forgiving sins, and so are some present-day writers, who regard our Lord as here presenting Himself as the creditor, of whom the sinner, by her misdeeds, has become the debtor. Thus, Loisy says: 'Luke may have attributed the remission of sins to Jesus Himself, but that is not the sense of the parable. According to the primitive interpretation, Jesus could not have compared Himself to the creditor[1] . . .' These are merely gratuitous assumptions; all who keep close to the text itself will find it abundantly clear, and in the highest degree significant. The sinner is debtor to God: 'Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.' And we have the same idea here. In varying degrees, we are all insolvent debtors, and to each his debt is forgiven in proportion to his love; but let us note carefully who it is that is here represented as He to whom our debt is owed, who forgives and who is the object of our love: none other than Christ Himself. Besides, this passage does not stand alone; its lesson is the same as that of our Lord's description of the Day of Judgement. Then the Lord, in the sight of all, will forgive our conduct in His regard, and it is after that that we shall be judged; not only then, but here and now on earth. He judges and forgives; not only as the Agent of Divine authority, but as the creditor who can forgive the debt with a word, and who does so to the woman who loves Him as this sinful woman did.[2]

S. Luke then goes on to describe our Lord's journey through the villages and towns:

'And it came to pass afterwards that He travelled

[1] *Ev. Syn.*, I, 690. Similarly, Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden*, II, 300: 'To regard Jesus as the creditor of the two parties in question is, in view of the Christological standpoint of the Synoptic writers, utterly impossible.'

[2] The Jewish writer Montefiore, after commenting at length on the whole story, concludes by saying: 'Is it not wholly inconceivable that this exquisite story should ever cease to be one of the treasured religious possessions of the Western world? Dogmatic Christianity in the course of centuries may disappear; Trinitarianism may be succeeded by Unitarianism; but the words of Jesus will still continue to move and cheer the heart of man. If Judaism does not, as it were, come to terms with the Gospels, it must always be, I am inclined to think, a creed in a corner, of little influence and with no expansive power. Orthodox Jews would, I suppose, say that they want no more. Liberal Jews should be less easily satisfied' (*Synoptic Gospels*, II, 437).

through the cities and towns, preaching and evangelizing the kingdom of God : and the twelve with Him : And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities : Mary who is called Magdalen, out of whom seven devils were gone forth.' (Luke viii, 1, 2.)

There can be no doubt that this account of S. Luke's, of the women who followed and attended our Lord, finds a place here on account of the preceding narrative, in which His merciful attitude to women is plainly shown.

We are told that Mary Magdalen had been delivered from the power of seven devils ; and this passage can be connected with the parable in which our Lord describes the sinner's downfall. The devil has been cast out, but he meets seven others worse than himself, and, re-entering the man whom he had but recently possessed, his victim's last state becomes worse than the first (Mark xi, 26). In neither passage are we obliged to press the literal interpretation of the number seven ; which, as in other passages of the Gospel, has merely a spiritual significance, and here denotes the violence of the possession. Mark, too (xvi, 9), mentions the seven devils cast out of Mary Magdalen, this time in connection with our Lord's appearance to her after His Resurrection. The very fact of this association of the two events is enough to make us understand how great a work our Lord had accomplished in this soul, thus freed from Satan's power and raised so high.

The name Magdalen means 'of Magdala,'[1] a town situated on the lake-side, about a Sabbath-day's journey from Tiberias. It was a wealthy place, renowned for its dyeing industry and its trade in doves. The rabbinical tradition, always inclined to exaggerate figures, credits Magdala with eighty wool factories and three hundred commercial houses, devoted to the trade in doves and pigeons. While making every allowance for exaggeration, we may accept the fact that there was here a great centre of trade and industry. Unfortunately, with riches came immorality, and to this cause the rabbis attributed the ruin of the place. To-day nothing remains of it but a few miserable huts and an old watch-tower. As a matter of fact, it was to an old tower of this kind (Migdol) that Magdala

[1] Some of the rabbis in the Talmud have the same origin and name ; so R. Isaac Magdelaah. (Cp. Edersheim, I, 571.)

owed its name, which can be recognized, slightly modified, in that of the hamlet of to-day (Mejdel); a walk twenty minutes to the north brings one to the valley now called 'the valley of doves' (Wâdy el Hamâm), whose name still recalls the ancient trade of Magdala. All these relics of the past are almost obliterated now, and of the former lively and dissolute city there survives only that memory of it which Christ has perpetuated: thanks to the poor possessed woman, the name of Magdalen has become cherished and revered, for every Christian a symbol of gratitude and most faithful love.

The other women are less well known: one of them, Joanna, was the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, and the fact of her following and serving Christ would imply that her husband was His disciple, too; from which fact we learn that the Gospel had gained adherents even in Herod's palace (like Manahen: Acts xiii, 1).[1] In this connection we may recall the tetrarch's words to his servants upon hearing reports of Jesus' works: 'This is John the Baptist. He is risen from the dead' (Matt. xiv, 2). Possibly Herod knew, more or less vaguely, the sympathies of some of his servants for Jesus, and had taken an opportunity of questioning them upon the subject.

Of Susanna we know only her name, from this passage, and that it means lily. Luke adds that there were many other women who, like these, followed and served our Blessed Lord; and we have Mark's words when he is describing Christ's agony on the Cross:

> 'And there were also women looking on afar off: among them was Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joseph and Salome, who also when He was in Galilee followed Him and ministered to Him, and many other women that came up with Him to Jerusalem.' (Mark xv, 40, 41.)

These two passages, and especially S. Luke's, enable us to follow rather more closely our Lord's life and its material conditions during His public ministry. Taken as a whole, as we have often observed before, the Gospel narratives show us Christ only in His works and teaching; all the material is so arranged as to propagate and explain the Faith.

[1] Godet suggests that Chusa was the royal officer whose son was cured by our Lord and thenceforth believed in Him, together with his whole household (John iv, 46–53). Evidently this is only conjecture.

And doubtless the rest is not so necessary, but it is certainly very precious. Here, as in the infancy stories, it is Luke who gives us the most precise information, and from this fact we can gather both the value of his sources and also the interest taken by the piety of the Christian community around him in everything that concerned its Master and Lord.

We have no difficulty in understanding the motives that underlay our Lord's action at this period. No longer staying in Capharnaum, as apparently He had done at first, He journeyed through the whole of Galilee from town to town and village to village. Such activity was necessary for the spreading of the Gospel. He was not alone, having the Twelve with Him, and this was a necessity too : they had to be trained for their future ministry, and the only effective and indeed possible training was that which He could give them by taking them with Him, preaching and performing miracles in their presence. But to be thus accompanied had its drawbacks. When He sent out His disciples two and two He might easily instruct them to go and ask for hospitality at the first house they came to ; but He could hardly introduce His twelve companions in the same way into the household of His guests : that would be to risk seeing the difficulty of Cana repeated too often, and it was no part of His plan habitually to meet the needs of the moment by working a miracle. The women who followed and served Him, ensured the subsistence and independence of the little band ; while at the same time they had the consolation of remaining at the Master's side, drinking in His teachings and example every day, and acknowledging by their services the blessings they had received at His hands.

Such a ministry as that of these holy women would not shock the Jews, for they were accustomed to it among themselves.[1] This Jewish custom obviously had its dangers,

[1] Thus S. Jerome writes on Matt. xxvii, 56 : 'Consuetudinis Iudaicæ fuit nec ducebatur in culpam more gentis antiquo, ut mulieres de substantia sua victum atque vestitum præceptoribus ministrarent. Hoc quia scandalum facere poterat in nationibus, Paulus abiecisse se memorat. Dicit enim ipse : Numquid non habemus potestatem sorores mulieres circumducendi, sicut et ceteri Apostoli faciunt ?' (1 Cor. ix, 5). 'Ministrabant autem Domino de substantia sua, ut meteret earum carnalia, cuius illæ metebant spiritualia. Non quod indigeret cibis Dominus creaturarum, sed ut typum ostenderet magistrorum, quod victu atque vestitu ex discipulis deberent esse contenti. Sed videamus quales comites habuerit : Mariam Magdalenam, a qua septem dæmonia eiecerat, et Mariam Iacobi et Ioseph

and Jesus Himself condemned the rapacity of the Pharisees who 'devoured the houses of widows' (Luke xx, 47 ; Mark xii, 40).[1] But even while He condemned their avarice, He showed by His example that this devotion, when inspired by faith, was holy and good. He who fed the whole world had willed to be suckled by the Virgin Mary. And so it was in His ministry ; by a miracle He fed crowds of three or five thousand strong, but Himself lived on alms, and taught His Apostles to do the same.

IV. The kinsmen of Christ. The Pharisees.

The incidents that we shall consider together in this paragraph are difficult to date. In Mark, the intervention of our Lord's relatives is connected with the accusations of the Pharisees, and the whole group of episodes is assigned to the early days of His ministry, soon after the calling of the twelve.

Matthew records the calumnies of the Pharisees on two separate occasions (ix, 32 ; xii, 22), and of these, the second narrative, which is at once the more complete and the one more closely resembling S. Mark, is placed after the account of the sending of the Apostles on their missionary tour. It, too, is connected with the intervention of our Lord's relatives (xii, 46–50), but this incident is less clearly recorded than in S. Mark, and in neither Matthew nor Luke is there anything corresponding to Mark iii, 21. Finally, Luke does not relate the attacks of the Pharisees until after the mission of the seventy disciples and when describing their journey (xi, 14–26), although he puts the visit of His relatives to Jesus sooner, immediately after the parable of the Sower (viii, 19–21). In all this uncertainty we shall not try accurately to date these events, preferably following S. Mark who, in narrating the incidents at Capharnaum, is giving us S. Peter's own memories, placing them more exactly and reproducing them in a more complete form than we find them elsewhere.

The scene of the narrative is at Capharnaum ; and the

matrem, materteram suam, sororem Mariæ, matris Domini, et matrem filiorum Zebedæi, quæ paulo ante regnum liberis postulaverat, et alias quas in ceteris evangeliis legimus' (P.L., XXVI, 214). Cf. id., *Adv. Iovin.*, i, 26 ; P.L., XXIII, 245.

[1] Cp. Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism*, I, 79, where he defends the Pharisees in this matter.

two groups who confront Jesus with their questions, His own kinsmen on the one hand and His enemies on the other, are no doubt very different, but they have this in common, that both had been aroused by our Lord's apostolic activities, and that neither the one group nor the other believed in His claims. The first were disturbed at His religious exaltation, with its condemnation of the people of Capharnaum ; and they hoped to restore order by taking Jesus away with themselves. The Pharisees on their part, were violently hostile : for them Christ was a man possessed, teaching, exorcising, working miracles by the power of the devil himself. This double assault is one of the most painful incidents in our Lord's public life : if the attack of the Pharisees is revolting, the incredulity of our Lord's relatives is lamentable in the extreme. But it is of no use ignoring it : the very indignity of such blindness helps us to understand the humiliations of Christ : ' He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.'

> ' And they come to a house : and the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when His friends had heard of it, they went out to lay hold of Him. For they said : He is become mad.' (Mark iii, 20, 21.)

This first mention of our Lord's relatives is only found in S. Mark, and it brings before us, on the very threshold of the events to follow, the gathering wave of feeling that our Lord's preaching was to provoke. Among the people of Capharnaum some admired, while others were filled with condemnation. ' He is become mad,' was their appraisement of what was taking place.[1]

The house to which Jesus returned was, no doubt, Peter's, which was our Lord's habitual residence when at Capharnaum. Those who came after Him ' went out ' from their own homes : it may be supposed with some probability that they went down from Nazareth to find Him at Capharnaum.

[1] This remark should not be attributed to Christ's relatives, but to the people of the neighbourhood ; the indeterminate use of the third person plural ἔλεγον, ' it was said,' being frequent in S. Mark. C. H. Turner in his commentary on S. Mark (S.P.C.K., 1928) compares ii, 18 ; iii, 32 ; v, 35 ; vi, 14 ; x, 2 ; xiv, 1 ; xiv, 12. Cp. J.T.S., xxv, pp. 378–86, especially 383 ff. Lagrange, *L'Evangile de Jésus-Christ*, p. 163, n. 1, writes : ' These worthy people do not come *because they said*, but *because they had heard it said.*'

The expression used by S. Mark to describe these people (*οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ*) is rather vague. Victor identifies it with the scribes and Pharisees of which there is mention later on, but this is to do violence to the text. Others, like Knabenbauer, see in these people the friends and disciples of our Lord. This interpretation relieves the incident of its most painful features, but it does not seem very probable. Most likely, those introduced here by Mark are the same whom we shall again find (31) approaching Jesus later on.[1] If we wish, if not to excuse, at least to understand this sentiment that we rightly find so revolting, we must remember that our Lord's first thirty years were spent in the obscure life of a small community, and that His kinsmen and fellow-villagers looked upon Him as one of themselves, an unlettered artisan. When they suddenly saw Him traversing the country as a miracle-working prophet they were seized with astonishment, that in many cases became disgust; and to readjust their judgement concerning Him, to sit humbly at His feet after despising Him for so long, was more than most of them could do. From this point of view, faith found far less obstacles among strangers, to whom Jesus was a person unknown; if there was indeed nothing to give Him any special claim on their allegiance, He was not already classified in their minds. So our Lord, who had met with such

[1] Cp. Lagrange: 'The persons who had gathered around Jesus cannot have belonged to the Twelve, or even to the wider circles of disciples who could only be called so in a lesser degree. The disciples surrounded our Lord (34) and could not therefore have come out to find Him. Besides, whether according to Semitic, Roman, or natural law, it is for the family to concern itself with one of its members who has ceased to provide for his own needs. The Vulgate understands the passage in this sense, by its rendering of *sui*, and the *Codex Syro-Sinaiticus* by using the words "his brethren," which again is a proof of the very wide sense of this word, capable of embracing relationship of any kind.'

On the passage in question S. Bede writes: 'Vere, sicut ipse dicit alibi, non est propheta sine honore, nisi in patria sua et in domo sua. Quem enim ceteri quasi auctorem vitæ et sapientiam Dei adire, videre, et audire desiderant, hunc propinqui quasi mentis impotem, esse ligandum decernunt. Quia enim altitudinem sapientiæ quam audiebant capere non poterant, quasi alieno eum sensu locutum esse credebant.'

Maldonatus well expresses the painful character of this episode: 'Hunc locum difficiliorem pietas facit; quia enim animus horret non solum credere, sed cogitare, etiam Christi cognatos aut dixisse aut existimasse eum esse furiosum, pio quodam studio nonnulli, relicta verborum proprietate, alias, quae minus a pietate abhorrere viderentur, interpretationes quæsiverunt. Nescio an, dum pias quaererent, falsas invenerint.' And he very justly adds, that what is said of Christ's kinsmen according to the flesh should not necessarily be applied to all.

an enthusiastic welcome on the shores of the Lake, was destined to fail at Nazareth from the very start. This bias of His fellow-citizens in His regard was still stronger and more rooted among those of His own kin. There can be no question here of our Lady or S. Joseph, who had both been admitted into the Divine secret; but the others, even those nearest to Christ, suspected nothing of the superhuman dignity of this simple artisan who had always lived with them on such familiar terms, while nothing in His life, so much the same as theirs, could betray an origin or destiny other than their own.

Consequently they were not to be convinced, either by the teaching or by the miracles of Christ. At the very end of His ministry, on the eve of the last Feast of Tabernacles, they sought Him out and said to Him:

> 'Pass from hence and go into Judea, that Thy disciples also may see Thy works which Thou dost. For there is no man that doth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, manifest Thyself to the world.' (John vii, 3, 4.)

And the evangelist adds: 'For neither did His brethren believe in Him' (John vii, 5). These are the stubborn unbelievers whose intervention we have just witnessed; and their incredulity can cause us no surprise.[1]

Even reduced to these proportions, the action of our Lord's relatives is shocking and painful enough. Not only

[1] We must not exaggerate the implication of their action, clearly odious enough, by giving to the Greek ἐξίστημι a sense that it will not bear. On this Lagrange justly remarks: 'The Vulgate rendering "*in furorem versus est*," i.e., "he is become mad," says far too much. In Mark, ἐξίστημι means that someone is beside himself with enthusiasm or surprise (ii, 12; v, 42; vi, 51). S. Paul did not think he had gone mad when he said: εἴτε γὰρ ἐξέστημεν, Θεῷ (For whether we be transported in mind, it is to God . . .; 2 Cor. v, 13). The meaning, then, is to go beyond all bounds, to be beside oneself; especially, in the present case, to neglect, through excess of zeal, the ordinary rules of life. So at the end of the episode—since we recognize the relation between the two incidents—we shall find that Jesus uttered no reproach to those who sought Him out, and that He did not attempt, as He did with the Pharisees, to prove that He was in His right mind. He merely denied their right to concern themselves with His affairs.' This is also Loisy's interpretation (I, 698): 'They did not assert that Jesus had lost His reason, the word employed by the evangelist not having this precise meaning in the New Testament, where it is used to denote a transport of astonishment, admiration, stupefaction or enthusiasm of any kind. But they believed that He was in a state of mystic exaltation that made Him lose all sense of the realities of life or of His own position in the world.'

does it suppose a complete lack of faith, but also the wish to drag Him away from His ministry, even against His own will, and to bring Him back to what these people thought a reasonable and sensible life. And the question must arise: What was Mary's attitude in the matter? It goes without saying that no Christian would cast a moment's doubt on her supreme respect for her Son, and her faith in Him. She knew who He was, and the mission He had to fulfil, and it is therefore certain that she could not associate herself with His kinsfolk's attitude; yet it is clear that she was present at the end of the episode (31). Was she present at the beginning? Fouard thinks not: in his view, our Lord's relatives first came to lead Him away, and did not succeed in reaching Him; then, 'despairing of penetrating the crowd, the kinsmen of the Saviour doubtless returned to Mary, and the Virgin, roused by their story, left her retreat to go with them' (I, 391). There is some probability in this, but it is not directly suggested by the text; nor, after all, does it remove the main difficulty. It matters little whether Mary was from the beginning associated with His kinsfolk's action, or whether she joined them later on; what is surprising is, that she should have joined them at all. On this Lagrange justly remarks: 'The presence of our Lord's Mother does not prove that she shared the sentiments of the others, neither on this occasion nor at the foot of the Cross.' If she accompanied His relatives, it was doubtless because she hoped to ward off the conflict between them and her Divine Son. She was conscious of the part that she had to play, that of reconciliation and keeping the peace. If she had left His relatives to their infatuated blindness, she had good reason to fear the excesses to which they might go; while, by accompanying them, she might hope to exercise guidance and restraint. Nor was she mistaken in these pious designs; for she had the consolation of seeing, standing there at the foot of the Cross, her sister Mary of Cleophas, and the mother of James the Less and of Joseph (John xix, 25; Mark xv, 40). Again, on the morrow of the Ascension, the Cenacle, the infant Church included not only the Apostles with the women and the Mother of Jesus, but His brethren as well (Acts i, 14). Surely we may attribute this change, in great part at least, to our Lady's influence. Jesus Himself could scarcely have reached these stubborn souls who had not joined the band of His disciples,

and who, far from submitting to His authority, claimed the right to impose their own upon Him ; but Mary was always with them, and her influence was bound eventually to enlighten their blindness and bend their pride.

But if she was to fulfil her part of bringing together her Son and the members of His family, destitute of faith in Him, it was necessary that our Lady should not separate herself from them, and should be at their side, cost what it might, in the steps they took, painful as they might be to herself. And she had to accept the confusion that these proceedings brought upon her as well as upon His kinsmen. All this she did with a good heart ; and at this price redeemed these souls whose lives were linked so closely to His own.

But before these people from Nazareth could reach Capharnaum, the scribes were already there, spying on Jesus, and bringing their favourite charges against Him, their hatred far surpassing the suspicion that had found an echo in the immediate circle of our Lord. These certainly were not content with accusing Him of being merely carried away by mystical fervour, but openly affirmed that He was possessed. Mark, who alone records this atrocious calumny (iii, 22), adds that the scribes who spoke thus came from Jerusalem itself.

It was when a demoniac had actually been exorcised that these calumnies broke out (Matt. xii, 22–24 ; Luke xi, 14, 15). The crowd who witnessed the exorcism were beside themselves with admiring astonishment,[1] finding spontaneous expression in the cry : ' Is not this the Son of David ? ' The expectation of the Messias was very much alive in these souls, and the Precursor's preaching had awakened it still more ; so it was quite natural that our Lord's miracles and teaching, His very reserve and the mystery with which He still surrounded His ministry, should arouse in the crowd, if not faith, at least the hope that this might be the promised Messias. It was just this dawning faith that seemed intolerable to the scribes, and, in order to stifle it, they had recourse to this wretched calumny which, none the less, coming from themselves, was likely to make an impression on the crowd ; Jesus was possessed, and if He

[1] We may notice in passing the sense of *ἐξίσταντο* used by S. Matthew to express the astonishment of the crowd, to be compared with the *ἐξέστη* of S. Mark.

cast out devils, it was by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils, himself.[1]

Filled with indignation at their bad faith, our Lord's reply is one of the severest that we encounter anywhere on the Gospel page (Mark iii, 22–30 ; Matt. xii, 25–32 ; Luke xi, 17–23 ; cp. xii, 10). In two brief comparisons, 'parables' as S. Mark calls them, He sets in the clearest light the absurd consequences of the Pharisees' calumny : ' If a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. . . . And if Satan be risen up against himself, he is divided and cannot stand, but hath an end.' And again : ' How can anyone enter into the house of the strong and rifle his goods, unless he first bind the strong ? And then he will rifle the house.' From Satan is to be taken what he thought he held fast, so that he will be conquered and bound ; and this adversary, stronger and better armed than Satan, can be none other than the Messias Himself. Then, passing to direct attack, our Lord asks the Pharisees : ' . . . If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out ? ' (Matt. xii, 27 ; Luke xi, 19).[2]

[1] ' Beelzebul,' writes Lagrange, ' is the same as Baal-Zebub, the god of Accaron (4 Kings i, 2). The word *zebub*, which means fly, has been changed into *zebul*, meaning dung, as an insult to this false god. . . . Such a change is entirely in the spirit of those who substitute the name *Bocheth*, " shame " for that of Baal. But it is very difficult to explain how the Baal of the flies, the ancient god of Accaron, became the prince of the devils. Perhaps it is because he was the only Baal in the Bible distinguished by an epithet ; perhaps, for the reason given in *Religions Sémitiques*, p. 85. But possibly the true explanation lies in a confusion of terms. The word for fly in Aramaic is דבבא, but בעלי דבבא means " the enemy." Perhaps it denoted the arch-enemy, i.e., the prince of the devils, a usage which we find in writers of spiritual books.' This last is the interpretation of Reuss (282) : ' We prefer a different explanation, which takes this name as composed of the Syriac words : *Beel debobo*, " lord of enmity," " the enemy," a name often given to the devil in the Gospels.' In any case, this is a detail of little importance ; what does matter is the calumny of the Pharisees, by which not only did they attribute our Lord's works to the assistance of the devil, but even declared Jesus Himself to be possessed.

[2] We know that the Jews practised exorcism. Josephus relates, in praise of Solomon, the fact that he had received from Almighty God the power of casting out demons, and that he had left written instructions as to the process, which were still in use. And in this connection he tells the following story : ' A Jew named Eleazer cured a man possessed of a devil in the presence of Vespasian, his sons, the tribunes, and a great crowd of soldiers. And this is how he did it : he applied a ring to the nostrils of the possessed man, under the seal of which was enclosed a root of the herb named by Solomon ; this he made the possessed inhale, and the devil came out by the nose. The man fell down at once, and Eleazar made the devil swear never to enter into him again, adjuring him in the name of Solomon, and reciting the formulas of incantation that that king had composed. Moreover, to show to everyone present that he really had this power, he

The conclusion drawn by Christ from this argument is a very important one indeed: 'If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you.' For victory over the demon was to be one of the marks of the expected reign of the Messias. And if this notion of the victory of the Messias over Satan was not one of the prominent features of the current Jewish eschatology, it none the less formed part of the circle of ideas of the instructed Hebrew of the time, a fact from which the passage before us derives all its force. Not only does Christ vindicate, against the calumnies of the Pharisees, the Divine origin of His power over devils, but He draws an argument from it in proof of the fact that He is the Messias. Once more we see how these affirmations of His, so prudent and reserved when He is dealing with the people at large, become much more categorical in form in the presence of the scribes, whose ignorance has not the same excuse.

It is with this idea of a conflict between Christ and Satan that are associated these words of our Lord, recorded in Matthew and Luke, but missing in Mark: 'He that is not with Me is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth.' In different circumstances, we shall find Him saying: 'He that is not against you is for you' (Luke ix, 50); and from this Renan draws the conclusion that, like Mohammed in the Koran, Jesus varies His attitude, treating the Jews with severity or respect, according to the strength of His hopes of attracting them to Himself; and he adds: 'an impassioned struggle almost necessarily involves contradictions of this kind' (p. 238). We have only to look at the two texts together to see that all apparent contradiction simply disappears. In Luke ix, 50, our Lord is speaking to John, who has been complaining because he saw a man, unknown and not a follower of Christ, none the less casting out demons in His name. Christ represses this false zeal on John's part

had a vase or basin full of water put before him, which he ordered the demon to overturn after going out of the man, to show that he really had been cast out of the possessed' (A.J., VIII, 5, 45–8). These Jewish exorcisms have been studied by Smit (*De Daemoniacis*, pp. 125–46), who admits their reality. The discussion is really outside our present subject. They were recognized by the Pharisees, which was sufficient justification for using an *argumentum ad hominem* against them. Volz (*Der Geist Gottes*, 135) concludes from this passage in the Gospel that the Pharisees exercised their pupils in the practice of exorcism, and required it as a condition of admission to their ranks. Perhaps this is to read more into the text than is really there.

with the words: 'Forbid him not: for he that is not against you is for you:' in other words, in judging our neighbour we must regard anyone who is not an adversary as a friend. But in the passage before us, the man is made judge of himself, and the rule to be followed is therefore more severe: if we are not followers of Christ, we must be regarded as His enemy, for no one can be neutral in the struggle between Christ and the Devil.

By the argument just reproduced, our Lord patiently refuted the Pharisees' calumny; and then, at the end of His reply, He points out the gravity of their fault. This is none other than the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; which will be forgiven neither in this world nor the next. In S. Matthew (xii, 31, 32) and S. Luke (xii, 10), this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is explicitly contrasted, as being a graver fault, to words spoken against the Son of Man. This comparison is lacking in S. Mark (iii, 28–30), none the less it certainly belongs to the original text, for we cannot suppose that our Lord's actual words were corrected in a sense apparently less favourable to the dignity of the Son of Man. They must be understood in the sense explained by S. Jerome[1]: those may be forgiven who are scandalized at the humility of the Son of Man, but not those who, while recognizing the presence within Him of a supernatural power, blaspheme it.

We must not conclude from this passage that there are any exceptions to the power of the keys, entrusted to the Church. It is universal, beyond all doubt. But those who resort to it must have the required dispositions, and this cannot be the case with those who sin against light, directly attacking the source of all grace, the goodness and mercy of Almighty God.

In Matthew and Luke the discussion with the Pharisees runs its course. Our Lord's enemies ask for a sign, and He answers that no sign other than that of the prophet Jonas will be given. This lively verbal contest, omitted in this

[1] 'Qui verbum dixerit contra Filium hominis, scandalizatus carne mea, et me hominem tantum arbitrans, quod filius sim fabri, et fratres habeam, Iacobum et Ioseph et Iudam, et homo vorator et vini potator sim, talis opinio atque blasphemia, quamquam culpa non careat erroris, tamen habet veniam propter corporis vilitatem. Qui autem manifeste intelligens opera Dei, cum de virtute negare non possit, eadem stimulatus invidia, calumniatur et Christum Deique Verbum, et opera Spiritus Sancti dicit esse Beelzebub, isti non dimittetur neque in præsenti saeculo neque in futuro' (81).

place by S. Mark, is connected by the other two evangelists with a later period of our Lord's public life. We will pass it over in order to follow the course of events at Capharnaum as related by S. Mark :

> ' And His mother and His brethren came and, standing without, sent unto Him, calling Him. And the multitude sat about Him. And they say to Him : Behold Thy mother and Thy brethren without seek for Thee. And answering them, He said : Who is My mother and My brethren ? And looking round about on them who sat about Him, He saith : Behold My mother and My brethren.' (Mark iii, 31–34. Cp. Matt. xii, 46–50 ; Luke viii, 19–20.)

This episode, related by the three synoptics, takes us back to the incident recorded by S. Mark. Our Lord's kinsfolk have come to fetch Him away, and in the interval all the events upon which we have just been commenting took place. Jesus had countered the violent opposition and the calumnies of the Pharisees. The crowd had gathered round them, worked up to a pitch of enthusiasm by the miracles they had witnessed, and stirred up by the argument that had broken out. It was at this juncture that our Lord's Mother and brethren arrived, and being unable to get through the crowd, sent Him a message to say that they were there. No doubt the motives that brought them to the spot were mixed. According to S. Mark's first narrative, they heard that Jesus was ' beside Himself ' and wished to take Him out of harm's way ; but it was certainly not this mistake or this wish that brought Mary there. No doubt, as we have said above, by going with His kinsmen to our Lord, she hoped to secure a better understanding and avoid a rupture between them ; perhaps, too, she was anxious about the growing hatred of the Pharisees, and wanted to urge Jesus to defend Himself. In fact there are many commentators who credit our Lord's brethren with this intention too, and, after all, there is nothing to prove that they were all equally incredulous, or led by the same motive in every case. At least it is to be observed that they did not press their demands, either now or later ; and we are therefore free to think that their plan to draw our Lord away from His work was neither unanimous nor well-conceived. He declined to accept any interference on their part and would only

recognize as His brethren those who did the Will of God. His word was final, and brought the matter to a close.

So this incident, so painful at first sight, contains a great lesson and a precious consolation for every Christian soul.[1] Our Lord was determined to demonstrate the independence of His ministry, just as He had done when a boy in the Temple at Jerusalem : ' How is it that you sought Me ? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business ? ' He made the same reply now, and with still better reasons than before : He was no longer a child, and He was not now speaking only to His Holy Mother, but to other kinsfolk as well, who certainly had not attained to her exalted outlook, or to her faith.

And this reply of our Lord forms a precious assurance for ourselves. It is not the ties of flesh and blood that can unite us to Christ ; for this, faith and obedience to God's will are all that are required. This is a lesson that we shall find our Lord repeating on another occasion similar to this. After having related the calumnies of the Pharisees on the subject of Beelzebub, and Christ's remark about the relapsed sinner, S. Luke continued as follows :

> ' And it came to pass, as He spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd, lifting up her voice, said to Him : Blessed is the womb that bore Thee and the paps that gave Thee suck. But He said : Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.' (Luke xi, 27, 28.)

Holy Church has chosen this Gospel for our Lady's feasts, understanding very well that, by this reply, our Lord did not mean to ignore the true greatness of His Holy Mother, but that He was pointing out where its true foundation lay. It was in this sense that, at the Visitation, Elizabeth said to Mary : ' Blessed art thou that hast believed ' (Luke i, 45). And, with these incidents, we may compare one reported by

[1] The lesson is thus developed by S. Ambrose (P.L., XV, 1678, *in Lucam*, vi, 36) : ' Moralis Magister qui de se ceteris praebet exemplum, atque ipse praeceptor, ipse etiam suorum exsecutor est praeceptorum. Praescripturus enim ceteris quoniam qui non reliquerit patrem et matrem suam, non est Filio Dei dignus, sententiae huic primae ipse se subicit : non quo maternae refutet pietatis obsequia (ipsius enim praeceptum est : qui non honoraverit patrem et matrem morte moriatur. *Ex.*, xx), sed quia paternis se mysteriis amplius quam maternis affectibus debere cognoscat. Neque tamen iniuriose refutantur parentes, sed religiosiores copulas mentium docentur esse quam corporum.'

the same evangelist in another place. Returning from their mission rejoicing, they told Jesus : ' Lord, the devils also are subject to us in Thy name,' only to receive the reply : ' Rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you : but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven ' (Luke x, 17–20). Thus we see that the most sublime privileges, the apostolate, nay, the divine maternity itself, are not the source of true happiness, because they are not, by themselves, the principle of union with God, independently of faith and the love of God. On the last day of His earthly life, in the final outpouring of His soul, Jesus told His Apostles : ' . . . I say not to you that I will ask the Father for you. For the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came out from God ' (John xvi, 26, 27). It is within the power of every Christian to secure to himself the same title to the Father's love. True, we have not followed Christ in His mortal life, but, as S. Peter told his converts, having not seen, we love (1 Pet. i, 8), and that is a happiness greater even than that of the Apostleship itself : ' Whosoever shall do the will of God, he is my brother, and my sister, and my mother.'

CHAPTER VII

THE PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

I. The purpose of the Parables.

If we continue to follow S. Mark's narrative, at the beginning of chapter iv, we read :

> 'And again He began to teach by the sea side. And a great multitude was gathered together unto Him, so that He went up into a ship and sat in the sea : and all the multitude was upon the land by the sea side. And He taught them many things in parables.' (Mark iv, 1, 2.)

After this short introduction, S. Mark records the parable of the sower and the other parables of the same group. S. Matthew, too, quite clearly locates this part of Christ's teaching by the lake side (xiii, 1–3) ; leaving the house where He was staying, He sat by the side of the lake ; but as great crowds began to gather round Him, He got into a boat and sat there, while the crowd stood on the shore, and 'He spoke to them many things in parables.' S. Luke (viii, 4) describes the circumstances of this new preaching effort of our Lord more briefly : he shows us vast crowds hurrying towards Jesus from every town, and receiving instruction in parables from the Lord.

From these data it is easy to reconstruct the setting of this preaching : 'A little bay of the Lake of Tiberias, with its fringe of oleanders, the people forming a semicircle on the shore ; Jesus is in the boat, with a few chosen disciples ; no rostrum could make a more impressive appeal to the people.'[1]

What is more important for our present purpose than the external setting, is our Lord's object in thus teaching in parables. Fouard explains it thus (I, 391) : 'The insults we have just related, our Lord's attempts to enlighten the people, the anxiety of His relatives, all show that a change

[1] Lagrange, *S. Marc.*

had taken place in Capharnaum during the second preaching expedition in Galilee. The Sanhedrin party had profited by the absence of Jesus to unsettle the people's minds, and, if they still remained faithful as a whole, the number of His enemies had so grown that our Lord had to abandon the plan of instruction that He had followed up till now. Great as was the difference between Himself and the scribes, He submitted to their methods, and from henceforth resolved, like them, to teach in figures and parables. But while the Masters in Israel made use of allegory only to deprive the common people of the treasures of wisdom reserved for their disciples, Jesus, in thus wrapping-up the thoughts that He wished to express, had no other purpose than to gain the necessary time to complete His whole scheme of instruction in the things of God. He had still to unfold the major part of this, the founding of the Church, with its constitution and hierarchy, a perennial source of suspicion to the great ones of the earth. So sudden a change was by its very nature likely to cause surprise ; but we shall see that it did not have the effect of repelling those otherwise attracted to our Lord.'

This explanation is not lacking in probability ; moreover it rests on the evangelists' own account, which we shall have before us a little later on. All the same, it has to encounter obvious difficulties. Fouard assumes that this parabolic method of teaching was employed by Jesus against His will, under the pressure of circumstances and on the model that the ' Masters in Israel ' supplied ; but this is certainly not the impression we get from reading the parables themselves : spontaneous, natural and extraordinarily expressive as they are. The question thus raised is one of considerable importance and intimately concerns theology, history, and exegesis alike. To arrive at a solution we must, above all, consider the explanation given by our Lord Himself to His disciples, which we find most clearly stated in S. Matthew's account (cp. Mark iv, 10–12 ; Luke viii, 9, 10) :

> ' And His disciples came and said to Him : Why speakest Thou to them in parables ? Who answered and said to them : Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven : but to them it is not given. For he that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound : but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath. Therefore do I

speak to them in parables : because seeing they see not and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And the prophecy of Isaias is fulfilled in them, who saith : By hearing you shall hear and shall not understand : and seeing you shall see and shall not perceive. For the heart of this people is grown gross, and with their ears they have been dull of hearing, and their eyes they have shut : lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and be converted ; and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For, amen, I say to you, many prophets and just men have desired to see the things that you see and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear and have not heard them.' (Matthew xiii, 10–17.)

Merely to read this passage will bring out one of the main difficulties involved. Let us suppose that the above verses were not found in the Gospels at all. If, in reading the parables of the kingdom of God, we should find ourselves asking why our Blessed Lord put forth His teaching under this particular form at all, we should reply that it was to make Himself better understood to His hearers, by presenting truths, otherwise beyond them, in a form familiar to themselves. But if we read the passage we have just quoted, does it not seem that Christ's purpose was quite different, and that of set purpose He used figurative language, which His hearers would be sure not to understand, in order to put their blindness beyond possibility of cure ?

It was this apparent contradiction that Jülicher, and Loisy afterwards, set themselves to denounce, concluding that the whole theory had been imagined by the first generation of Christian writers, in clean contradiction to our Lord's real intentions, to explain the otherwise too-evident check that His preaching received.

' We can distinguish,' says Loisy (I, 739–740), ' three stages in the process of redaction, corresponding to the development of the traditional view concerning these parables of Christ. First, they would be simply related, probably in written form identical with that in which they have come down to us, and furnishing an example of the Gospel teaching as given in a series of parables, without further explanation, since they presented no difficulty to be

solved. The second stage, in which the disciples are represented as asking for and obtaining an interpretation of the parable of the Sower, makes us suspect that the parables were being found less clear, that the very moderate success of the preaching of the Gospel among the Jews, or perhaps still more the instability of certain conversions, was causing surprise, and that the interpretation of the parable of the Sower supplied the explanation that was required. Finally, the third redaction reveals the fact that minds were probing deeper in the search, either for the fundamental reason for the obscurity of the parables which by this time had become traditional, or for the cause of Israel's blindness. Since it was easy to find the cause of this last fact in a providential decree of reprobation which carried with it the curse of blindness, and since no one could dream of seeing any kind of defect in the imaginary obscurity of the parables, men persuaded themselves that this mysterious kind of instruction had been expressly chosen by the Saviour Himself, to bring about the realization of God's designs upon His people. Jewry was not converted, because it ought not to be converted, and the Gospel truth was presented in the form of an enigma, so that they might not see it nor be saved.'

This extremely artificial theory is contradicted by the very parables that it pretends to explain. The distinction that it tries to set up between these parables in their primitive form and their later elaboration, does violence to the facts and is destitute of support ; while the perspectives of the future which can be discerned in the parables are made clear by our Lord Himself. The third stage in the process of redaction is gratuitously separated from the two first. No doubt the explanation given in the Gospels is not too easy to understand, which is all the more reason for regarding it as of early date. The faithful would never have thought of attributing these motives to our Lord ; they found them already in the tradition they had received. The only argument with any show of force in favour of Loisy's view, is the apparent opposition between the spontaneous impression made by the parables on a first reading, and their motive as afterwards explained to the Apostles ; or between the terrible severity of the plan revealed to them, and our Lord's infinite mercy and constant efforts to enlighten and instruct all who listened to His words. This, at first sight a formidable

difficulty, will be solved by a careful study of the passages before our eyes.

In the first place, it will be apparent that instruction by means of parables was a new method in our Lord's ministry. Here we regret to have to differ from Lagrange in the view he has expressed in *Revue biblique* (1910, p. 10). 'In our opinion,' he says, 'we can see in Mark's gospel no sign of a change in the people's attitude to our Lord, or in His methods in dealing with them. . . . If we are to believe modern authors, it was by the Lake of Genesareth, when He uttered the parables of the kingdom, that Jesus, confronted with the obstinate refusal of His claim by the Jews, had adopted an obscure method of teaching, beyond their power to understand. Now it is quite sufficient to read Mark to be convinced that it was not then that Christ began to speak in parables; that, up to the time of His Passion, the enthusiasm of the crowds that thronged around Him had always been the same, and that—let us say it a thousand times—above all and beyond all question, Jesus always directed His words to their highest good.'

In this, there is much that we are ready to accept, especially as to our Lord's constant efforts to instruct the people. But on the preliminary question before us at the moment, it is impossible to acquiesce in Lagrange's view. No doubt, if his solution were the right one, it would have the advantage of settling the question in the completest and most agreeable way; there would be no need to search for motives for a change of attitude that did not exist. Unfortunately, it seems to us impossible to interpret the Gospel account in this way. In connection with the parable of the Sower, the synoptics themselves raise the question with which we are faced, and all three, after recording the parable itself, relate how Jesus gave the solution to the disciples alone, telling them that it was to them that it was given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom, and not to those outside.[1] This opposition between the two classes of hearers is something new in Christ's teaching, a fact not unnoticed by the Apostles themselves. 'Why speakest Thou to them in parables?' is the question that S. Matthew tells us they actually put to our Lord, a question only to be understood if there had been some change in the methods employed by Him. No doubt He had spoken in parables before. We

[1] Cp. Huby, *S. Marc*, 90 ff.

have, in Mark, such figurative statements as that concerning the house divided against itself (iii, 23) ; or earlier (ii, 17) : ' They that are well have no need of a physician, but they that are sick ' ; or that implied in the question (19) : ' Can the children of the marriage fast as long as the bridegroom is with them ? ' Or (21) : ' No one seweth a piece of new cloth to an old garment . . . and no man putteth new wine into old bottles.'[1] But these short sentences show none of the developed form of the parables of the kingdom, and it is only in the case of these that the three synoptics record the private interpretation given by Jesus to His disciples, at the same time insisting on our Lord's predilection for this type of instruction. Thus Mark, before commencing his explanation of the parables, introduces them with the words : ' And He taught them many things in parables ' (iv, 2) ; and then concludes the chapter by saying : ' and with many such parables He spake to them the word : and without a parable He did not speak unto them ' (33, 34). Referring to this passage, Buzy remarks : ' We recognize the hyperbolical character of these last words ; but every exaggeration, if it is to be other than a mere false statement, must be an enlargement upon a genuine fact. It is clear, then, that at and from this time Jesus often employed the parable-story in His teaching of the people ; and, unless I am mistaken, we are to find in this novelty, joined to its frequency, the inauguration of a new method ' (p. 367).

But to have settled this point is simply to face the problem, and in no sense carries the solution in itself. By His parables of the kingdom, Jesus, we have been led to conclude, inaugurated a new method of teaching ; but we have still to seek the reasons for the change.

One first and very obvious reason is to be found in the subject of the teaching itself. Up to this point, our Lord's preaching had been pre-eminently concerned with moral issues, and in this matter He could speak freely to His hearers, who could grasp His meaning without fear of error. Trust in the Father in heaven ; the beatitudes ; riches and their danger ; on all these subjects there was no danger of being misunderstood ; and our Lord could speak openly of them to all comers. But it was quite different where His kingdom was concerned : ' Before a Galilean audience,' writes Buzy (p. 382), ' as much care was required in speaking

[1] Buzy, *Paraboles*, 366.

of the kingdom as of the Messias. While the whole body of scribes and Pharisees were only looking for something at which to take offence, some claim to denounce, even some blasphemy of which to accuse our Lord, so far as the people were concerned, the thing to be feared was a frenzy of enthusiasm leading directly to disaster. On one side, then, Jesus had to deal with susceptibilities bred of suspicion no less than of vigilance ; and on the other, to guard against an excess of good-will from those who were imbued with an invincible prejudice. Yet He could not be silent. The hour had come for Him to proclaim, in some way, His mission in the world, and this He would do by submitting His words to a cautionary censorship, which censorship precisely constituted the " economy "[1] of the messianic revelation.'[2] It is to be remarked that our Lord speaks here of the ' mystery ' of the kingdom of God, and that it is only here (Mark iv, 11) and in the parallel passages (Matt. xiii, 11; Luke viii, 10) that the word is used in the Gospels at all.[3]

Thus the subject that had henceforth to be treated by our Lord led Him to employ a new method, and to teach the people with more precaution in a matter of so obscure and difficult a kind. This reason alone would suffice to explain the use of parables, and several authors, for example Mangenot, acknowledge no other than this. None the less, it seems clear that the Gospels hint at another reason, too. ' To you it is given to know the mysteries of heaven, but to them it is not given.[4] For he that hath, to him shall be

[1] The ' economy ' was the collective name given by the Fathers of the Church to this trait of our Lord's preaching. [Translator.]

[2] Cp. Mangenot, *Les Evangiles synoptiques*, p. 242.

[3] Lagrange : ' It is found only in S. Paul (twenty-one times) and in the Apocalypse (four times). It is never employed in the pagan sense of a secret religious ceremony, but means always either a secret, pure and simple, or, as here, a design of Almighty God, necessarily hidden, since the ways of God are not to be sounded by human thought. The realization of God's kingdom is the great design in question here. Others, who are not judged worthy of this favour, receive their instruction in parables alone. Since, of its very nature, a parable is employed to produce clearness, it must be supposed that some degree of obscurity envelops the mystery concerned. It is hidden, because God's ways are past finding out. If it *is* revealed to those outside, it is only by parables which, being an indirect method of speech, cannot shed full light on a subject so obscure ; especially when they have not been explained. Thus it is what concerns the kingdom of God that is put forward under the form of a parable ; this is certainly the theme of those in S. Mark, beginning with the Sower.' (Note on Mark iv, 11.)

[4] Lagrange, *S. Marc*, p. 99, compares *Num. rabba*, xiv, 228b (on vii, 89). ' God spoke to Moses face to face . . . but to Balaam He spoke only in figures.'

given, and he shall abound ; but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath. Therefore do I speak to them in parables : because seeing they see not, neither do they understand.' These words of Christ, recorded by S. Matthew, are clear enough ; unless we reject or ignore them, we are forced to acknowledge that the parables are not without obscurity, expressly intended by our Lord to punish the Jews for their blindness to the truth.

In the passage in part quoted above, Lagrange is at pains to show that the great mass of the people remained faithful to our Lord. They followed Him into the desert, even forgetting the necessity to eat and drink ; and even on the very eve of the final crisis, whether at His entry into Jerusalem or His preaching in the Temple, they showed themselves so fervently attached to Him that the priests dared not seize Him, for fear of provoking a riot (Mark xiv, 2 ; cp. xi, 18). In the face of facts like these, it may be asked how we can admit that the attitude of the people was such as to require punishment of any kind. The enthusiasm of the people is beyond discussion, but so is their blindness. We remember how the Jews followed Christ into the desert, but we cannot forget that He said to them, even then : 'Amen, amen, I say to you, you seek Me not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled' (John vi, 26). And the same reproach could be brought against them at our Lord's entry into Jerusalem : the enthusiasm was great, but it was bound to be transient because it was blind. On this point Buzy justly concludes (p. 350) : 'If in a few words we must describe the attitude of the crowd to our Lord, we might say that its enthusiasm found its goal in Him as a wonder-worker rather than as the Messias, as the popular Messias rather than as the true one, as benefactor of the body rather than as healer of souls, as sympathetic talker rather than as preacher. Certainly, its sentiments were neither those of hatred nor indifference. These Galileans loved Jesus, and believed at least in His goodness and His power ; but they had neither the love nor the faith that our Lord desired. At bottom, they remained a people of impulse : thoughtless and selfish. They saw, and they saw not ; they understood, and yet they did not understand ; they believed, yet they were unconverted and without true faith.'

The presence of such dispositions imposed on Jesus con-

ditions that He had to keep. If He had had before Him a people, not already converted, but at least sincerely desirous of being so, and therefore capable of understanding something other than dreams of national greatness and independence, He might have explained more clearly the nature of God's kingdom, as well as His personal claims as the Messias. But, since it was otherwise, He contented Himself with putting the thought of the kingdom before them in its boldest outlines: the humility of its beginnings, the force of its growth, the boundless horizon of its future. This was the meaning of His words; 'to him that hath shall be given, and he shall abound; but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath.' We shall meet this saying again in the parable of the talents (Matt. xxv, 29; cp. Mark iv, 25; Luke viii, 18). The law that it expresses, shocking at first to our equalitarian instincts, is verified daily in the sphere of earthly goods. As Maldonatus long since observed, if we have to choose a banker, we shall select the one that has the largest capital at his disposal; and it is the same in the spiritual order as well. God's graces call to each other; and nothing disposes the soul to receive them so effectively, as the spirit of faith and the love of God; in other words, these are the gifts of God that are the best disposition for receiving yet further gifts.

For the rest, this very obscurity, which was at the same time the consequence and the punishment of the Jews' blindness, was not without a merciful design. By the slightly enigmatic form of His parables, our Lord wished to provoke enquiries and stimulate interest. It was with the same end in view that He called the attention of His hearers at the beginning and the end: 'Hear you.' 'He that hath ears to hear let him hear.' 'Do not say,' says S. Chrysostom (P.G., LVIII, 473), 'that He spoke obscurely; people could come and ask Him questions, as the disciples did; but they would not, because they were idle, and given over to the things of self. Why do I say: They would not. Because they did the exact opposite, for not only did they not believe, not only did they not listen, but they attacked Him, and took ill what they heard Him say.'

It is easy to see how this attitude of our Lord is in harmony with His spirit of compassion, and His constant concern that the people should be taught. S. Chrysostom again very justly says: 'If He did not wish the Jews to be saved, He

needed only to keep silence ; there was no need for Him to speak in parables : but He wanted to stimulate them by the very obscurity of His words ' (ib.). Thus, having to teach a doctrine so lofty, and at the same time so liable to fatal misunderstandings, and being face to face with a people stubbornly obsessed with their dreams, whom He had not succeeded in converting by His previous preaching, He could only impart knowledge as they were able to bear it ; and this resulted in some obscurity, or at least incompleteness, in the parables that were the vehicles of His teaching. Each of the little pictures that He traces for us are wonderfully clear ; but their precise meaning is not so evident, nor the extent to which they are to be applied. Take, for example, the parable of the cockle, and then its interpretation as given by our Blessed Lord. We shall see at once how this develops and glorifies the rôle of the Messias to an extent certainly not necessitated by the text of the parable itself. The difference between the two shows us how much the parable in the Gospel narrative left unsaid. That, in His public teaching, our Lord should have stopped at that point, was at once the consequence and punishment of the blindness of the Jews. Yet they only had to ask Him to lead them further into this revelation of the kingdom of God. Jesus wished to call forth this effort on their part, and, in most cases, failed.

This analysis of the passage concerned, and of the relative facts, seems to us to account for both, without the necessity of leaving anything out, and without the possibility of the slightest shadow being cast on our Lord's goodness to men, and His sincere and efficacious desire to convert His hearers. But we still have to examine the quotation from Isaias, made in this connection by the evangelists themselves. In the great vision that he records in his sixth chapter, we see the prophet is described receiving his great mission from Jehovah Himself :

> ' And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying : Whom shall I send, and who shall go for us ? And I said : Lo, here am I. Send me. And He said : Go, and thou shalt say to this people : Hearing, hear and understand not : and see the vision and know it not. Blind the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes : lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and be converted, and I heal them.' (Isaias vi, 8–10.)

On this subject Lagrange[1] quotes the commentary of Duhm: 'Religion, in itself medicine, becomes poison to those who flout its claims. Amos and Osee threaten the withdrawal of the consolations of religion; while, according to Isaias, the judgement consists in the excess of revelations from above. In subsequent eschatology, Isaias' conception —the more profound of the two—has rightly prevailed. The world cannot be put in the right dispositions to receive the new creation except by the complete overthrow of its actual state, which overthrow is rendered necessary by the paroxysm of sin, which in turn supposes the highest revelation of the good.'

This chapter of Isaias is referred to in a number of places in the New Testament. 'From the passage before us,' once more writes Lagrange (ib.), 'by a somewhat similar passage in S. John (xii, 37) and by the narrative of S. Paul, preaching in the Acts (xxviii, 25), we see that, from the earliest days of the Church, Christians had been struck by the resemblance between the mission of Isaias and that of Christ. Isaias had been charged by Almighty God to preach penance, but he knew that he would have no success. The great mass of the nation would be involved in a frightful disaster; only a tiny remnant would be saved, and this was to be the nucleus of a restored and more holy Israel. Surely it was this very thing that was taking place under the very eyes of the Apostles.' All the same, there is a difference between the situation as seen by Isaias and by the evangelists. For the prophet, it was the too brilliant light of revelation that blinded the Jews; for the disciples, on the contrary, it was the obscurity of the parables by which they were taught. But in both cases they were destroyed by the abuse of what was, in reality, part of the plan of God's compassionate love.[2]

[1] *Revue biblique*, 1910, p. 29.

[2] This passage of Isaias and its parallels have recently been studied by A. Skrinjar in some strongly-written articles in *Biblica*, XI (1930), pp. 291–321, 426–449; XII (1931), 27–40. He thus concludes his study of Isaias (XI, 301): 'The passages that we have studied up to the present, show in what the action of God in bringing spiritual blindness upon man consists. Man is the victim of this blindness: (*a*) because God has abandoned him and not given him the gift of sight; (*b*) this may be regarded as an infallible result of God's action, as if He had positively hardened the man's heart; (*c*) Almighty God does not permit such blindness, except for a very real and lofty purpose, even though it be often inscrutable to ourselves; (*d*) in the case of non-culpable blindness, God may positively and directly produce this disposition in the man. We believe that it is considerations such as these, assumed rather than affirmed by the sacred

These points having been cleared up, only one question remains. God could have chosen means of conversion of such signal power as to have conquered the bad faith and spiritual blindness of the Jews; but He did not. The ultimate reason for this is beyond us; we can only bow in worship and humble submission to the Divine will. S. Augustine, in his commentary on S. John, writes with reference to this passage (tr. 53): 'Here another question arises. To treat it as it deserves, to sound its mysterious depths, is beyond my strength, the time at my disposal or your capacity.' However, he is willing to reply to those who ask what was the fault of the Jews, which produced so fatal a result. 'We reply that the Lord, who foresaw the future, by his prophets foretold the incredulity of the Jews. He foretold it, but He was not its cause; for although Almighty God foresees the future sins of men, He in no sense forces anyone to sin.' This answer is familiar to all Catholic philosophers, who know that the science of divine things compels no one to accept its truths. Inasmuch as it sanctifies Truth itself, it guarantees the freedom of the act by which such truths are known. But this is no more than the reply to an objection; it is not, and cannot be in itself, the explanation of the mystery. So S. Augustine goes on: 'God's judgements are just, but they are secret. So, when such questions are raised as: Why is such a person treated in such a way, and another differently? Why is this man abandoned and left in spiritual blindness by God, while another is enlightened and helped? let us make no claim to judge the judgement of so great a God, but, like the Apostle, trembling, let us cry: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgements and how unsearchable are His ways!" Or, as the Psalmist says: "Thy testimonies are wonderful." So then, my brother, let not the impatience of your charity engage me to penetrate to these depths, to discuss this abyss, to sound the bottom of that which can never be reached. I know my weakness, and I think I am also conscious of yours. This enterprise is too ambitious for my resources, too arduous for my strength, and I think also for your own. Let us listen together to Holy Scripture, which

authors, that have led them to choose terms so rigoristic, in a grammatical sense, to express this action of Almighty God upon the soul. In most cases, grammatically speaking, it is impossible to soften the sense of the passages in question.'

warns us. "For it is not necessary for thee to see with thy eyes those things that are hid" (Ecclus. iii, 22).' (*In Joann.* tr. liii, 4, 6, 7.)

I think that we may, without shame or false modesty, apply S. Augustine's words to ourselves. Such mysteries are beyond us, and to look at them too closely is to be crushed under their weight. So, let us be content with what information we have been able to glean, while we adore the designs of Almighty God. Besides, we may remember that if the parables of the kingdom remained obscure to the Jews, they are made clear enough to the disciples. The crowd, as we have said above, could have, and ought to have questioned our Lord; it did not, but the Apostles did, and consequently it was given to them to know the mystery of the kingdom of God. It is true that, even so, their minds were not free from prejudice; their dreams of national greatness were still dear to them, and up to the very day of our Lord's Ascension, they harassed Him with their ambitions and impatient zeal. And the Master bore with them indulgently, but at the same time unceasingly put before their eyes prospects that filled them with amazement and even fear. Christ must suffer and die; such is the price of the kingdom of God. And sometimes, like S. Peter at Cæsarea Philippi, the Apostles revolted at the thought; only to be severely rebuked by our Lord and to submit humbly to His reproof. Thus, little by little, they became accustomed to these new revelations, ever more difficult to understand and heavier to bear, but which the Holy Ghost could come on the Day of Pentecost to illumine and transform. And this deposit is the common treasure of the Church.

Thus, what the multitudes in their blindness could not receive from Christ Himself while He was upon earth, they were destined to accept from the Apostles' hands. They would be the teachers of the New Law, and, like faithful stewards, they would draw from their deposit all the riches which we need, *nova et vetera*. That is at once their privilege and their greatness; what kings and prophets have longed to see and have not seen, what the crowd saw without seeing, this they contemplated and understood. But, once again, this knowledge was not for them alone, a fact of which our Lord had warned them in words recorded by Mark iv, 21–23:

'And He said to them: Doth a candle come in to be put under a bushel or under a bed, and not to be set on a candlestick? For there is nothing hid which shall not be made manifest: neither was it made secret but that it may come abroad. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.' (Mark iv, 21–23.)

It follows that, in the Gospel, there is no esoteric teaching which will and must remain the secret of the initiated alone. While the Gnosticism of every epoch will have its mysteries, the Christian system, in this sense, has none at all.

But, that the Apostles might hand on all those mysteries to the Church, they had first themselves to have received the deposit of the Faith; consequently, from this time forth, our Lord's main efforts would centre round the training of the Apostles who were to be witnesses upon earth. We have followed Him in His ministry in Jerusalem and Judea; we have seen how the definite jealousy of the Pharisees had compelled Him to abandon those places, and confine Himself to Galilee. There still, the first enthusiasm of the crowds was alive and keen. Men were lost in admiration at His miracles, struck by the authority of His words, eager to hear Him, pressing ever upon His path. But, alas! it was at this barren admiration that the majority stopped. Our Lord's call to penance left them cold: we do not even find, in those who crowded round Jesus, that fervour of conversion that was to be observed by Jordan during the preaching of the Precursor of Christ. The majority listened to Christ without any anxiety to carry out His commands—foolish builders, who built upon the sand. And already storm and flood were threatening the edifice so imprudently raised; the Pharisees spied upon our Lord, were scandalized at His teaching and miracles, and blasphemed the Holy Spirit within Him. The crowds listened without following them—yet. But soon the moment would come when whoever was not with Christ would be against Him. After His moral teaching, which filled the first few months, He was about to unfold His mission, and to explain the true nature of the kingdom of God that He had come to establish here below. And here, too, the people listened eagerly, but, half-converted and therefore ill-prepared, they could not understand this kingdom of God, so different from that of their own dreams. And this blindness compelled our

Lord to put forth His teaching only under the veil of parable —a transparent veil, no doubt, for those who had the will and the knowledge to look beneath it ; a veil that He Himself was only too anxious to lift for all His hearers, as He had for His disciples. But neither did His pressing appeals arouse the attention of the crowd, nor the semi-obscurity of His parables stimulate the spirit of enquiry among them ; they listened, but without any effort to understand better, or to do better in their lives.

Hence all our Lord's efforts were now to be concentrated on His own disciples. Certainly, He did not forsake the multitude, continuing to have pity upon these poor shepherdless sheep ; but His greatest care was to train those who should be able to be shepherds to them in their turn. To them He revealed the mystery of the kingdom which the crowd could not receive, and which the Apostles would teach them later on. Above all, He revealed Himself in His daily life, by His familiar conversations, and sometimes by more startling manifestations, like that of the Transfiguration, designed to strengthen the faith of the Apostles privileged to witness it, fortifying them against the shock of the Passion, and later to enlighten the whole Church.[1]

II. The Parables.

The preceding study was concerned with the form into which our Lord cast His teaching ; raising and seeking to answer such questions as : What are the parables of the Gospels? and : Why did Jesus teach in parables at all? Now another question, not less important, presents itself,

[1] On this question, cp. Lagrange, *Le but des paraboles d'après l'évangile selon saint Marc* (*Revue biblique*, 1910, pp. 5–35) ; note on the purpose of the parables (*Saint Marc*, pp. 96–103) ; *L'Évangile de J.-C.*, pp. 164–171 ; L. Buzy, *Introduction aux paraboles évangéliques* (Paris, 1912), pp. 233–400 ; L. Fonck, *Die Parabeln des Herrn* (1909) ; A. Durand, *Pourquoi Jésus a parlé en paraboles. Études*, 107 (1906), pp. 756–771 ; A. Charue, *L'Incrédulité des Juifs dans le Nouveau Testament* (Gembloux, 1929), pp. 120–144 ; 204–210 ; H. B. Swete, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London, 1921).

A. Jülicher's theory has been explained by him in his work *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* (Tübingen, 1899 ; reprinted in 1910). Vol. I (pp. 1–328) treats the question of the parables as a whole, while Vol. II (pp. 1–643) deals with the interpretation of each separate parable. Loisy has defended the same theory in his *Etudes évangéliques* (Paris, 1902), pp. 1–121. Similarly R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (Göttingen, 1923), pp. 101–129, and the article *Gleichnis* in *R.G.G.*, col. 1240 ff.

viz. : What was the teaching that Christ gave in this way ? In other words : What is this kingdom of God, that He had begun to preach ? To enter into it, the surest, though not the most rapid method is to follow the Lord step by step, reading His parables again, and, when He supplies an interpretation, studying that as well.

> 'Hear ye : Behold, the sower went out to sow. And whilst he sowed, some fell by the way side : and the birds of the air came and ate it up. And other some fell upon stony ground, where it had not much earth : and it shot up immediately, because it had no depth of earth. And when the sun was risen, it was scorched : and because it had not root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked it. And it yielded no fruit. And some fell upon good ground and brought forth fruit that grew up and increased and yielded, one thirty, another sixty, and another a hundred. And He said : He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' (Mark iv, 3–9. Cp. Matt. xii, 3–9 ; Luke viii, 4–8. These accounts differ little from S. Mark's which is the most detailed and varied of the three.)

The parable of the Sower is the only one of this series of parables to be found in all three Synoptics ; in which respect it may be compared with the parable of the Vineyard[1] of which the same can be said. This fact is explained by the importance of these two parables : that of the Vineyard revealing the whole position and work of Christ, while the parable of the Sower is concerned with the preaching of the Gospel and its reception among men. Consequently it forms an introduction to the other parables of the kingdom ; the others describe the kingdom itself, and its laws of growth ; the present parable, its promulgation in the world.

The story of the Sower is told, especially in S. Mark, with a precision of detail which makes it live, and gives it the stamp of truth. It describes something that took place daily under the eyes of our Lord's hearers, and that we may see to-day in every field of the Holy Land. Most of the roads are merely stoneless tracks, and when the ruts left by the wagons are too deep, and the heavy showers of springtime have filled them with mud, passers-by make a path for themselves along

[1] Likewise with that of the Mustard-seed ; but the latter is merely indicated in S. Luke, and in a different context.

the edge of the field, so that the original track is widened to right and left. None the less, on this trampled earth the sower still casts his seed ; it is a windfall for sparrows. On each side there is the stony earth, that we see so often in Palestine ; then there are thorns ; and lastly the good ground, with its yield of thirty, sixty and a hundred fold.

Jesus began with His cry of ' Hear ye,' and finished with the well-known words : ' He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' Thus He called the attention of His audience ; and then went on to give the parable without explanation, leaving each to work out its meaning for himself. Those most impressed—and they were those most intimately connected with Himself—proceeded to question Him about it :

> ' And when He was alone, the twelve that were with Him asked Him the parable. And He said to them : To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God ; but to them that are without, all things are done in parables : That seeing they may see and not perceive : and hearing they may hear and not understand : lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them. And He saith to them : Are you ignorant of this parable ? And how shall you know all parables ? He that soweth, soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown, and as soon as they have heard, immediately Satan cometh and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these likewise are they that are sown on the stony ground : they who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but are only for a time : and then when tribulation and persecution ariseth for the word they are presently scandalized. And others there are who are sown among thorns : these are they that hear the word. And the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts after other things entering in choke the word : and it is made fruitless. And these are they who are sown upon the good ground : they who hear the word and receive it and yield fruit, the one thirty, another sixty, and another a hundred.' (Mark iv, 10–20.)

This interpretation falls easily into two parts. In the first, Jesus explains to His disciples why He spoke in parables to the crowd. Of this, we have already said enough. In the

second part, He interprets the parable of the Sower for the benefit of the disciples themselves.

The interpretation itself is clear as a limpid stream, and only needs to be read to be understood. But it will be of some service to dwell on it awhile, as it helps us to understand, better than any description could do, the different groups of hearers with whom Jesus had to deal. The expression : ' these are they by the way-side,' ' these that are sown on the stony ground,' found in Mark and Luke, and to some extent in Matthew, need not be a difficulty to anyone. It is clear that, strictly speaking, it is not the hearers who are sown, but the word that is ' sown in their hearts ' (Matt. xiii, 19). These are mere details of compilation, to which every reader of the Gospel will be accustomed, and which he can rectify for himself.

The first hearers, symbolized by the road, present but a hard and beaten soil into which the seed of the Gospel cannot sink. Satan comes, and removes this seed lying fruitless on the ground. The second are the rocky soil : like light and shifting ground, they have received the seed, which promptly germinates and springs up ; but it is without root, and is shrivelled up and burnt by the first persecution that comes. We recognize here the same kind of souls which were compared, in the Sermon on the Mount, to the man who builds his house upon the sand, with the result that the next storm levels it with the ground. When our Lord spoke these words, His work, then in its infancy, was not yet exposed to persecution on a large scale, but it was already the object of suspicion and dislike ; soon, His followers would be driven from the synagogue (John ix, 22). To hold one's own against the official Judaism, and to find no stumbling-block in these decisions of the most venerated religious authorities, something more was needed than a passing enthusiasm that received the word with joy, but without allowing it to take deep root by practising the teaching that had been received.

The next kind of ground to be considered was not barren, but was infested with thorns, a figure made by Christ to represent those of His hearers who were absorbed by the passion for riches, and the cares of this world. Here again, we return to the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. There, too (Matt. vi, 19), our Lord tried to turn His hearers' minds away from such cares, with their tendency to invade the soul and keep it from union with God. ' No man can

serve two masters ;' besides, as our Lord observes here, the love of riches does not come alone. Other passions come with it, stifling and rendering barren the Gospel seed. This comparison of our Lord's is reproduced by Hermas in *The Shepherd*, sim. ix, 20 : 'From the third mountain, covered with thorns and thistles, come believers of the following types : some are rich ; others are caught in the rush of business ; the thistles represent the riches, and the thorns stand for those involved in a multiplicity of affairs. These last in no way consort with God's servants, but walk at random, far from them, preoccupied by the many things to which they have to attend. As for the rich, they, too, are little in the company of God's people, fearing lest they should ask some favour from them. Such men will enter with difficulty into the kingdom of God. For just as it is difficult to walk barefoot among thistles, so is it difficult for such men to enter the kingdom of heaven.'

Lastly, we have the fourth category, only one quarter of the whole, as Reuss remarks. His remark is reasonable, but should not be pressed too far ; for we are told nothing of the proportion of our Lord's hearers in each of the classes that He names. These last are those who not only hear the word but 'receive' it (Mark), 'receive it with joy' (Matthew), 'keep' it (Luke)—the last evangelist adding : 'and bring forth fruit in patience' ; so contrasting them with those hearers whom the adversary discourages and turns back. Thus, the last word of the parable echoes that of the Sermon on the Mount : to bear fruit in Christ's school, we must know how to bear, with patience, persecutions and storms of every kind.

> 'And He said : So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the earth, and should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up whilst he knoweth not. For the earth of itself bringeth forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear. And when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.' (Mark iv, 26–29.)

This parable, which is only found in S. Mark, is the only one recorded by him which has no parallel in the two other synoptic Gospels. The preceding parable brought out the diverse character of our Lord's hearers ; this, like those

that follow, deal with the kingdom itself, and the laws of its growth. Once again, the Gospel is compared to a seed, although here our Lord is not concerned to show us that the seed that He came to deposit in the soil of the world will develop in accordance with its own laws, and under the urge of its own expanding force ; such lessons, well-founded as they are, are to be learnt elsewhere. Here, we are to understand that it is God who ensures the seed's growth. The man who has cast it into the ground goes on with the ordinary avocations of his life, following the usual sequence of wakefulness and sleep, thinking no more of the seed, which grows he knows not how ; for his part, he will but return to reap the harvest when the fields are ripe. 'Neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase' (1 Cor. iii, 7). S. Paul reminds his hearers of this truth, in order to distract them from personal questions and the factions that inevitably result. But our Blessed Lord has another purpose in view, viz. : to make it clear that the Gospel's progress is primarily the affair of Almighty God Himself. 'Like the labourer in the field,' writes Loisy, 'Jesus sows the kingdom by preaching the Gospel ; it is not His to gather in the harvest, that is the final coming of the kingdom ; nor must we be impatient that this coming is not realized at once. That is God's affair, just as the kingdom's present mysterious growth is His secret and His work.[1]

At the same time, the return of the Sower for the harvest when the corn is ripe was to warn the disciples what He Himself would return to do, and how it was for them to look always for His coming. 'No sooner would the disciples have recognized Him as Messias and Judge, than they would necessarily have seen in Him the reaper of the harvest as well. And when He had withdrawn from the earth, the Apostles would understand that the kingdom that He preached must develop without the presence of the Master, who would return only to gather the harvest at the end. So this parable, so simple in appearance, was susceptible of expansion to an indefinite extent. Those who heard it were bound to interpret it as of the infallible development of the kingdom of God ; while, at the same time, it contained a gracious invitation to confidence and calm. On both grounds it was admirably suited to the Galileans, anxious

[1] Loisy, *Evangiles synoptiques*, I, 765.

at the course of events, and always ready to intervene with violence to establish what they thought to be the kingdom of God.'[1]

> 'Another parable He proposed to them, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. And the servants of the goodman of the house coming said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence then hath it cockle? And he said to them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: No, lest perhaps gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn.' (Matt. xiii, 24–30.)

This parable—found in S. Matthew only—is easy of interpretation, too; its purpose being to show how, in spite of the fact that the heavenly seed is always good, evil in the world is mingled with good. The servants in the parable, astonished at the growth of the cockle, ask the master: '. . . didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence then hath it cockle?' And the master replies: 'An enemy hath done this.' And then the servants, angered and shocked at seeing the cockle mixed with the wheat, are seized with the desire to pluck them up, but are restrained by the master, who tells them that the time for separation is not yet: there would be a danger of pulling up the wheat with the cockle; they must wait for the harvest. Once more, all this is plain enough and could be applied directly and at once. Scarcely has God's kingdom taken root in the world, than already as it rises above the ground it is possible to distinguish the cockle by the side of the wheat. Among the folk who crowded round our Lord there could be discovered not only sincere and devoted disciples, but souls undecided, and even enemies who had come to spy and to denounce. And proportionately to the growth of the crop was the height and thickness of the

[1] Lagrange, *S. Marc*, pp. 117 ff.

cockle ; there must be heresies and false brethren, too. And if some are scandalized, and ask why, the Master answers that it is an enemy who has sown the evil growth ; the heretic is ' the first-born ' of Satan himself. We may notice here the definitely personal character of this enemy of God. Christ could have described the cockle as having been carried by the wind or the birds, but instead He made a point of showing that it had been sown by the enemy, maliciously and at night. So it was that, in interpreting the parable of the Sower, speaking of the first hearers, typified by the hard ground, He said : ' Satan cometh and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.'

But human impatience is not content with knowing the origin of evil ; it is anxious to remove it from the world. ' Wilt Thou that we go and gather it up ? ' spoke the sons of Zebedee, indignant at the rebuff that our Lord received at certain Samaritans' hands : ' . . . Wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them ? ' (Luke ix, 54). And how many share their impatience today ![1] Doubtless every plant not planted by the heavenly Father will be rooted up (Matt. xv, 13), but later on, when the harvest comes. So in the Apocalypse we seem to hear rising to God the cry of those slain for Him :

> ' How long, O Lord (Holy and True), dost Thou not judge and revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ? And white robes were given, to every one of them one. And it was said to them that they should rest for a little time till their fellow servants and their brethren, who are to be slain even as they, should be filled up.' (Apoc. vi, 10, 11.)

Before giving the interpretation of this parable, S. Matthew gives the explanation of those of the mustard-seed and the leaven ; we may here invert the order in which Matthew places them, so as not to separate the parable itself from its explanation, as given to the disciples by our Lord Himself.

> ' Then having sent away the multitudes, He came into the house : and His disciples came to Him, saying :

[1] ' There are always persons who are ready to propose drastic remedies for real or supposed evils, and it is with regard to them that the main lesson of the parable is given. Men are not to anticipate the judgement of God, for they will do much more harm than good by attempting to do so. . . .' (Plummer, *Matthew*, 193.)

Expound to us the parable of the cockle of the field. Who made answer and said to them : He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man. And the field is the world. And the good seed are the children of the kingdom. And the cockle are the children of the wicked one. And the enemy that sowed them is the devil. But the harvest is the end of the world. And the reapers are the angels. Even as cockle therefore is gathered up and burnt with fire : so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send His angels : and they shall gather out of His kingdom all scandals and them that work iniquity. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' (Matt. xiii, 36–43.)

This interpretation of the parable is remarkable in more ways than one. First, we find in it the central part played by the Son of Man. He is the Sower and the Judge : it is He who presides over the harvesting when it comes, for the angels are only the executors of His commands, they are His angels, and come at His behest to separate the wheat from the cockle. His field of action is the world ; here the horizon, limited during Christ's earthly ministry to the people of Israel, half opens and reveals to the Apostles the boundless field of their apostolic work. The wicked and the damned are not represented here as outside our Lord's sphere of action ; they are inside His kingdom, but they are there as seducers causing the ruin of others, and as artisans of iniquity. As to the ultimate fate of good and evil, it is painted here with all the features always associated with it in the Gospel ; as Reuss observes, in this picture we cannot make a choice, rejecting the traditional imagery of the punishment of the lost, and preserving as a dogma the description of the happiness of the elect. Lastly, we may note that the interpretation of the parable stresses not exactly the actual text, but rather the two categories of hearers, 'sown' respectively by the Son of Man and the Devil, surely the familiar conception of the children of God and the children of the Devil which we find so frequently in S. John. Here, then, we see how the teaching implicit in the parable was developed for the Apostles in the interpretation given by Jesus Himself, who, not content with

merely giving them the key to the figures that He employed, showed them the deeper meaning that they could bear. Fr. Lagrange, in a passage quoted above, sees in the parable of the seed, with its silent growth, the source of religious truths deeper than those that appear at first sight. It is the same here, and it is our Lord Himself who calls us to this more intimate research.[1]

> 'And He said: To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or to what parable shall we compare it? It is as a grain of mustard seed: which when it is sown in the earth is less than all the seeds that are in the earth: And when it is sown it groweth up and becometh greater than all herbs and shooteth out great branches, so that the birds of the air may dwell under the shadow thereof.' (Mark iv, 30–32. Cp. Matt. xiii, 31, 32; Luke xiii, 18, 19.)
>
> 'Another parable He spoke to them: The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened.' (Matt. xiii, 33. Cp. Luke xiii, 20, 21.)

The meaning of the parables is the same. Both sketch the growth of the kingdom, than which nothing ever was so little or hidden in its beginnings, or greater when it attained its full growth. The images used by Christ in teaching this lesson were already familiar to all His hearers. The Jews had a proverbial expression: 'small as a mustard seed,'[2] and while the shrub that it ultimately became was certainly not a great tree, it was the largest of garden vegetables, which was enough for the purpose in hand. Again the figure of the birds of the air dwelling 'under the shadow thereof' was one beloved of the prophets. As Ezechiel had said of the Assyrian: 'All the fowls of the air made their nests in his boughs' (xxxi, 6), while Nabuchodonosor in a dream saw himself as a great tree: 'under it dwelt cattle and beasts, and in the branches thereof the fowls of the air

[1] Loisy (I, 778) thinks that we have here a later Christian elaboration of a Gospel passage, and that then the interpretation reacted on the parable itself, transforming it into an allegory. Buzy (215) satisfactorily refutes these objections. That fidelity to real life which is an essential condition of the true parable needs to be interpreted so rigidly as to exclude everything that was not part of current practice; e.g., the cockle sown by the enemy; while the prospects of the future disclosed in that interpretation of the parable have no improbability about them when they are found on the lips of Christ Himself.

[2] Cp. Strack-Billerbeck, I, p. 669.

had their abode. And all flesh did eat of it' (Daniel iv, 9; cp. 18). By adopting the same image and applying it to the kingdom of heaven Christ recalled to the imagination of His hearers all these great empires of the past.

The figure of the leaven arouses a rather different idea, suggesting more the power of assimilation of the Gospel than its simple growth. But the essential teaching is always the same: humble beginnings and powerful growth. Among the ancient Hebrews as well as among the Greeks, leaven was generally taken as a symbol of impurity and corruption:[1] an impression confirmed by the institution of unleavened bread for the Passover Feast. This is the only passage in Holy Scripture which reveals a different point of view, adopted also later by S. Ignatius of Antioch (*Magn.* 10), making the same comparison as our Lord: 'Cast away the bad leaven, old and sour; and be transformed into the new leaven, which is Jesus Christ.'

Reuss, in commenting on the parable of the mustard seed writes (p. 322): 'The kingdom of God had no startling beginning characterized by some amazing and decisive victory, such as was anticipated in the public belief of the time; but it had its birth in obscurity, commencing modestly in the heart of a small number of disciples, but destined to gain ground slowly and insensibly until it gathered under its protection the whole human race. Nothing proves more clearly than this parable how far Jesus was from sharing the fantastic hopes of His time with reference to an immediate revolution in the government of the world. If at times He seemed to acquiesce in such hopes, passages like this help us to appreciate what the nature of His positive teaching was.' And we may add that in this providential plan we can see the finger of Almighty God. Surely, in nature itself His most wonderful and beautiful works are to be found in those living things whose growth takes place gradually under the vital impulse that He Himself has given. On the other hand, man's works belong to the sphere of art; they come into being suddenly, but from the beginning they are dead. It could not be so with the Gospel—a veritable work of God, slow in growth, but destined to cover the world and transform the human race.

'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field. Which a man having found, hid it: and for

[1] Cp. Lightfoot, note on *Galatians*, v, 9.

joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls. Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way and sold all that he had and bought it.' (Matt. xiii, 44–6.)

Again, we find the same lesson in both these parables. Of such value is the kingdom of heaven that a man must buy it at the price of all that he has ; and however dearly he pays, it will always be worth infinitely more. The meaning of both is perfectly clear ; but it has been asked with reference to the former of the two, what is to be thought of the conduct of the man who, having found the treasure in a field, hides it again and goes off to buy the field itself. Such hidden treasures were not rare, and we may remember how, in the parable of the talents, one of the depositaries buried his talent in this way. The question arises : Would treasure buried in this way legitimately belong to the finder, or not ? It was a point of morals that was much discussed.[1] We need not settle it here. Similarly it is of little importance to enquire into the man's motive in hiding the treasure afresh ; whether it was to prevent the discovery of the treasure by someone else, or to enable him to buy the field from the owner without his knowing what he was really about to sell. We need not enter into that question here. What matters for the moment is simply the value of the treasure, whose finder is only too happy to buy it at the cost of all his goods. And it is the same with the pearl of great price. The man in the parable seems to have been a merchant rather than a collector. This pearl is his fortune ; its present possessor knows nothing of its value ; but he does : so he sells all he has, buys it, and is content.

The teaching given here in parable form is the same that Christ was to give later to His disciples when He sent them out on their preaching mission.

'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it : and he that shall lose his life for Me shall find it.' (Matt. x, 37–9.)[2]

[1] Cp. Strack-Billerbeck, I, 674.
[2] Cp. *Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, p. 281.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like to a net cast into the sea and gathering together of all kinds of fishes. Which, when it was filled, they drew out: and sitting by the shore, they chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth. So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall go out and shall separate the wicked from among the just. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire. There, shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' (Matt. xiii, 47–50.)

This last parable strongly resembles that of the cockle, in stressing the mixture of good and bad in the kingdom of God, but without emphasizing the double action, respectively, of God and the devil. The Apostles appear in the light of fishers of men, who gather both good and bad into their net. But it is not for them to effect the division between the two. This will be done at the end of the world, when the angels will cast the wicked into hell, thus playing the same part as in the parable of the cockle.[1]

'Have ye understood all these things? They say to Him: Yes. He said unto them: Therefore every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like to a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old.' (Matt. xiii, 51, 52.)

After recording seven parables, by way of conclusion S. Matthew adds these few words of our Lord. A little further back he shews us the disciples questioning our Lord as to why He spoke in parables at all, being evidently rather mystified at this method of teaching the truth. So Jesus makes sure that they have understood. We need not be surprised He is satisfied about this without attempting to interpret the later parables, as He did those of the Sower and the cockle. After all, they were the longest and contained the fullest teaching, while the others were so short and clear in themselves as to make any interpretation unnecessary. Besides, the explanations already given in the case of the first two parables should have helped the

[1] Plummer writes: 'It is difficult to believe that Christ could have given these interpretations of the parables of the Tares and of the Net, if there are not such beings as Angels. They do not look like accommodations to current beliefs. And it is not likely that the Angels were no parts of His interpretation, but have been imported into it by tradition. Cp. xvi, 27; xviii, 10; xxii, 30; xxiv, 31–41; xxvi, 53' (*Matthew*, 198).

Apostles to understand the rest : if they have grasped the meaning of the cockle, they ought to have no difficulty about the net cast into the sea.

Satisfied that the disciples have understood His teaching, Jesus added that every scribe who had been initiated into the kingdom of God was like the master of a house bringing out of his store things new and old. And here we seem to have a fresh cause for surprise. What, it may be asked, was there less in sympathy with Christ and His Gospel than the spirit of the scribes ? Perhaps it may be thought that this passage in which they are compared with the Apostles is the work of some redactor, and does not represent any words of our Lord. This is to forget that Jesus spoke the language of His people and His time, and could apply the title of doctor or scribe to His Apostles without any inconsistency at all. No doubt there were no more like the scribes of rabbinical Judaism than our Lord's teaching resembled that of the Pharisees ; but they were doctors all the same, transmitting and interpreting the treasures of truth that they had received. They could understand that, and all the more because our Lord had stated it in language familiar to themselves. In the same way He would say later : ' Behold, I send to you prophets and wise men and scribes ' (Matt. xxiii, 34). These scribes of the kingdom of heaven would bring out treasures new and old ; the teaching of the parables would show them how everything around them in daily life could be used to express the mysteries of the kingdom ; Christ's example and the light He shed around Him would teach them that they, too, could draw from their treasure truths to teach to men. All this was within their reach, that, understanding it, they might teach others less favoured than themselves.

CHAPTER VIII

LAST PERIOD OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

I. The Stilling of the Tempest.

THE stilling of the tempest is recorded by all three evangelists (Mark iv, 35 ff. ; Luke viii, 22 ff. ; Matt. viii, 23 ff.), but not in the same place in the chronological setting of the Gospel story.[1] Mark, who gives the most circumstantial account, explicitly connects this crossing of the lake with the preaching of the kingdom and its accompanying parables. Here again, we are simply following the recollections of S. Peter himself. Our Lord had entered his boat to explain the parables ; this being accomplished and night falling, He decided to cross the lake. 'As He was,' and without leaving the boat, He set out. We see Him here just as He pictured Himself to the scribe, having nowhere to lay His head, and going hither and thither as His work called Him without engaging a lodging or making preparations of any kind. His disciples were poor, like Him ; and so they started. Four vessels followed them—probably those of hearers who were anxious to hear more. In any case, they have no further part in the story, and quite possibly they were scattered by the storm.

In the lake boats even to-day the place of honour is at the stern, where a padded seat or a cushion is usually to be found ; there our Lord rested His head and fell asleep. He foresaw the tempest and wished to put the disciples' faith to the test ; but He was tired, too, with the long day, and sleep was a physical necessity for Him as it is for us. So He slept just as, when crossing Samaria, tried by the journey and the heat, He rested near Jacob's well. But this is the only time that the Gospels represent Him as actually asleep.

And then, suddenly, the storm broke. In this lake, sunk in the earth like a deep basin and encircled by mountains

[1] On this point see the arguments of S. John Chrysostom, who considers that S. Mark follows the chronological order more faithfully than S. Luke.

on every side, storms in winter are frequent and almost without warning of any kind. Through the gorges in the cliff on the north-east and the east the wind rushes, lashing the sea into fury ; and it was thus with the storm in question as described by Mark and Luke ; while if we take S. Matthew's expression literally, an earthquake would almost be understood. The boat, well laden, since it contained Jesus and His twelve Apostles, was soon covered by the waves till it was nearly filled. And Jesus still slept. But now His disciples arouse Him with the cry : ' Master, doth it not concern Thee that we perish ? ' It is to be remarked that, even under the stress of such appalling fear, it never seems to have occurred to them that there was any danger to our Lord Himself. But His being asleep seemed like indifference in the presence of their own danger, something in the same way that, in less tragic circumstances, Martha was surprised that Jesus seemed to reck nothing of the trouble she was in. ' Lord, hast Thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve ? ' (Luke x, 40). But after all, this is natural enough : we, too, and quite as much, think Almighty God careless of our dangers and griefs. Then Jesus awoke, and having stilled the tempest by a word, reproached the Apostles for their lack of faith. According to Mark and Luke He first calmed the storm, while in Matthew's account He stirs up their failing faith before performing the miracle at all. But this is of little consequence ; what matters much more is the authority with which He calms the wind and the sea. ' Something like this was done by Moses of old, but Jesus showed Himself greater than he. Then it was the miracle of a servant ; now it is that of the Master, who needs not to stretch out a rod or lift His Hands to heaven, or even to say a prayer.' He commands by a single word.[1]

On this occasion the Apostles showed themselves weak, but not wholly without faith. They believed in their

[1] S. John Chrysostom, 352—On this command of our Lord, Loisy (797) writes : ' Jesus threatens the sea, as in the Old Testament God is often said to do, and Mark reproduces His words. The fact is, that the sea and the storms are not thought of as material elements capable of causing death, but as a living creature, a hostile power troubling creation's peace. Our Lord's threat is not a rhetorical gesture. He threatens the sea and the wind, as He did the demons ; for the same reason, and to the same end.' S. Jeromesays more truly : ' Ex hoc loco intelligimus quod omnes creaturæ sentiant Creatorem . . . non errore hæreticorum, qui omnia putant animantia ; sed maiestate Conditoris, quæ apud nos insensibilia illi sensibilia sunt ' (53 d).

Master, and counted on His help, and that is why they awoke Him at all. But their faith is still very imperfect; it only needs the sleep of Jesus and His apparent indifference to extinguish it altogether. So Jesus reproves them. Later on, many worse tempests will require of them a faith more sure.

This warning, and still more the sight of the miracle, strengthens the tottering faith of the Apostles, and a new fear comes over them, not greater certainly than the fear of danger which had so recently been theirs, but the kind of fear that a man feels when he is face to face with a manifestation of Divine power, the same that, after the miraculous draught of fishes not long before, had thrown Peter at Jesus' feet with the words: 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' We observed then that Peter was the more strongly moved by this miracle because it affected him in his daily life; and it is the same now. A storm calmed by a word was for the sailors of the lake something more striking than the cure of a paralytic or the casting of a devil out of a man possessed. Of other miracles they had been witnesses; but of this they were themselves the subjects and beneficiaries as well;[1] nor did the other miracles contradict a long experience of their own. They had seen many storms in their time and they knew that they were *not* calmed by a word, above all not suddenly; when the wind fell, the sea remained rough for some considerable time: but this time it was a question of total calm descending after the storm. In speaking of the cure of Peter's wife's mother, we remarked that her violent attack of fever, when cured, left behind it no after results, and that the erstwhile sick woman was able at once to put herself at our Lord's service. Here we find something similar and more concrete, too, since the laws governing matter are more rigid, and since in this case we cannot assume the favourable effect that a transport of moral feeling would bring.

II. The Demoniac.

After this sensational crossing the little company found themselves on the eastern shore of the lake. The identification of the spot is not without difficulty. It has been named Gadara, Gergesa (by Origen), and 'the country of

[1] Cp. S. John Chrysostom, 351.

the Gerasenes' (Matt. viii, 28); but recent archæological expeditions of the Jerusalem Dominicans seem to have cleared up this obscure point.[1] 'The place where the demoniac was freed would be *moqâ edlô*, and the neighbouring town, Kursi; although we may have to look further and towards the south for the tombs inhabited by the demoniac who wandered over the whole mountain at will.'

The precise details given by S. Mark enable us to reconstruct the scene with all its vivid effect. Our Lord and His disciples had set out in the evening on a cross-lake journey of about eight miles which, under normal circumstances, would take nearly three hours. But the storm must have retarded the boats, and no doubt the night was well advanced when the shore was reached. No sooner had they landed than there was seen coming out from among the tombs, and rushing towards them, a naked man, covered with bruises and crying aloud, 'What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, the Son of the Most High God? I adjure Thee by the Most High God that Thou torment me not.' We can imagine the Apostles' alarm at this infernal vision rising from among the tombs and coming towards them in the dead of night. No sooner had the demoniac seen Jesus than the evil spirit within him recognized his Master, and roared out words which are recorded here and which can be freely rendered: 'What do you want with me? I am doing you no harm. Leave me alone;' adding, according to S. Matthew: 'Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?' Doubtless the devils are already in torment, but it will not be until the last day that their punishment will be complete.[2] Since he adds the expression 'by God,' the demon does not here recognize without qualification the Divinity of our Lord. The title that he gives Him: 'Son of the Most High God,' is not a messianic one, but it is an acknowledgement, vague, but very humble, that there was a Divine element in Christ, and that His origin was of an exceptional kind.

However, Jesus exorcised the man, with the words: 'Go out of the man, thou unclean spirit,' and then asked his name. Evidently this question was put to the demon and

[1] Cp. Lagrange, *L'Evangile de Jésus-Christ*, pp. 184–86, and plate 14.

[2] Cp. Jude, 6: 'And the angels who kept not their principality but forsook their own habitation, he hath reserved under darkness in everlasting chains, unto the judgement of the great day.'

not to the man, and it is the demon who replies, 'My name is Legion, for we are many.' These spirits wished to remain in the country. Our Lord granted their request to be allowed to enter into a herd of swine, who were near by. No sooner had they done so than the herd of animals 'with great violence was carried headlong into the sea, being about two thousand, who were stifled in the sea.' Our Lord had allowed the demons to enter the swine, of whose loss they would be the cause. So also does He permit the temporal ills from which we suffer, but which are the price of a higher good. 'You are of more value than many sparrows,' said our Lord to His disciples, and a man freed from the power of an evil spirit was worth infinitely more than a whole herd of swine.

This man had been suddenly restored to life, normal and in 'his right mind;' others came up shortly, and found him sitting at Jesus' feet, clothed and having himself completely in hand. The fact of possession had made of a man a savage beast, the shame and terror of the country for miles around; but through the action of Christ he had once more become a quiet, decent member of society, with the marks of human dignity upon him once more. Surely we have a hint here of the whole contrast between Satan's bondage and the service of Christ. This picture, painted with so sure and delicate a hand, lends its character to the whole story; on the other hand, a popular legend would have described the cure in terms mysterious and far-fetched. Nor have we any difficulty in disposing of the puerile error of those who fancy that some psychological explanation will fit the facts. The theory would be somewhat as follows: The demoniac was only a madman. Powerfully moved by the personality of Christ, he threw himself upon the herd of swine, who in terror rushed into the lake, while the man, suddenly calmed by Jesus, came and sat at His feet. To lend colour to this view, not only would it be necessary to change the whole text, and to attribute to the man possessed a course of action which the evangelists utterly ignore, but—and this is the main point—it would have to be admitted, after all, that such a sudden transformation, truly miraculous in its nature, was brought about by the moral influence of Christ alone. 'It would not be possible,' says Reuss (p. 338), 'to get rid of this capital fact, that a cure of madness so intense in character, which must have completely ruined the nervous

system of the victim, or at the best brought about an absolute prostration of all his powers, physical and mental alike, had yielded to a few words spoken in a few seconds, and given place to a state of health and sanity such as the rest of the narrative attests.'

However, the keeper of the swine had told the story and, in the morning, people began to come. The sensation caused by the story that they had heard only increased when they saw at our Lord's feet, calm and peaceful, this man who had been the terror of the country for so long. Once again they went through the whole scene, and, feeling the presence of some supernatural force in this unknown wonder-worker from the other side of the lake, they are frankly afraid of Him and implore Him to leave their 'coasts.' The population of this country, still in large part pagan, was ill-prepared for the Gospel message; in Christ's supernatural power they saw nothing but a matter for fear; and so our Lord had to leave and regain the other shore, where He would find an audience less ignorant and more ready to be taught. When He was entering the boat the restored demoniac asked to be allowed to go with Him; Christ would not permit this, but told him to spread around him the good news of what the Lord had done for him. This command he obeyed, and all who heard him 'wondered.' So this poor man, who for long had been nothing but an object of horror and fright, became the first evangelist of the Decapolis. Later, the Apostles, and especially S. Paul the most enterprising of all, would, in their turn, be showing the heathen what God's grace can make of a man whom it has freed from the power of the devil and sin.

III. The woman with the issue of blood. Jairus' daughter.

No sooner had Jesus reached the other shore than a crowd of people began to gather round Him and, from among them, Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, seeing Jesus ran up and fell at His feet with the cry: 'My daughter is at the point of death. Come, lay Thy hand upon her that she may be safe and may live.' While our Lord is following him, with the crowd pressing round Him on every side, a woman afflicted with an issue of blood of twelve years standing came behind and touched his clothes (Mark v, 21–43; Matt. ix, 18–26; Luke viii, 40–46).

These two miracles, the raising of Jairus' daughter and, so to speak, enclosed in it, the case of the woman with the issue of blood, are found in all three Synoptics ; but here, as so often, it is Mark who gives the most detailed and lively account ; S. Peter, one of the privileged witnesses of this raising from the dead, having even put him in possession of the *talitha kumi*, which were our Lord's actual words to the little maid.[1] To these descriptions, already vivid enough, there is very little to add. Jairus asked our Lord to lay His hands on his daughter, a traditional rite (cp. Naaman, 4 Kings v, 11) which Christ Himself had several times voluntarily employed (Mark vi, 5 : cp. vii, 32 ; viii, 23, 25). Jesus followed, still surrounded by a great crowd, and the afflicted woman profited by this circumstance to approach Him without exciting any remark. Her illness had made her liturgically unclean, and she could not make herself known without being driven away ; so she hoped to steal a miracle, if such an expression may be allowed. The poor creature was well worthy of pity ; she had been afflicted in this way for twelve years, and had spent all she had in fruitlessly seeking medical advice.[2] So, mingling in the crowd and approaching from behind, she touched one of the little tassels which would have hung from each corner of the Saviour's dress.[3]

She was cured at once, but it was not our Lord's wish that the miracle should pass unnoticed. 'Who hath touched Me ?' He asks, and, all trembling with shame and emotion, the woman who had just been cured threw herself at His feet, confessing the whole thing. 'Daughter, go in peace ; thy faith hath made thee whole ;' these few words show clearly what our Lord's intentions really were ; not in the least to publish the miracle ; very often, in such cases, He

[1] On 'kum' in the rabbinic formulas of healing, cp. *Schabb.*, 110 a–b ; Strack-Billerbeck, I, 520.

[2] The illness in question, especially dreaded by Jews and very difficult to cure, is the object of strange remedies and prescriptions, enumerated in the Talmud, *Schabbath*, 110a. Strack-Billerbeck, I, 520. Among these, the ashes of an ostrich's egg carried in some linen stuff in winter and cotton in summer ; or a grain of barley lodged in the dung of a white mule. If the woman holds this in her hand for a day the bloody flux will cease for two days ; if she holds it for two days, then for three ; if she holds it for three days the bloody flux will cease for ever. All the same, these were rather the remedies of sorcerers than the nostrums of old wives. No doubt the poor invalid of the story had tried them ; anyhow she was at the end of her resources and of her patience as well.

[3] On these tassels see Strack-Billerbeck, XII, Exkurs, *Cicijjoth*, iv, 277–92.

ordered silence to be observed. But He wanted to enlighten the woman herself, and to show her that what was most important in the whole incident was not the physical contact but her own faith.[1]

While this first miracle was being worked, Jairus' daughter died, and messengers came to inform her father of the fact. There was no need then to trouble the Master any more. It was like what, later on, Lazarus' sister would say to our Lord : 'If Thou hadst been here—' without any hope of raising from the dead being in her mind. On that occasion Jesus would tell His disciples : 'Lazarus our friend sleepeth,' and here, too, He speaks in a similar strain : 'The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth ;' in other words, death is in her case only a sleep from which He is going to awake her now ; probably, too, He wished to lessen the excessive excitement that the miracle would cause. For the same reason He takes with Him only His three privileged witnesses, Peter, James and John. The house, as He entered it, was full of general confusion, tears and cries ; and our Lord's statement that the girl was only asleep was received with derisive mirth. However, He turned everyone out of the house and only taking with Him His three Apostles and the mother and father of the child, He took the little dead maiden by the hand. Then came the words : 'Talitha kumi,' and the child arose and walked with all the vigour of her twelve years.

[1] Many Protestants have been shocked by this story. Calvin (quoted by Maldonatus) sees in the woman's action a superstition analogous to the cult of relics ; and Reuss too (343–4) thinks that the narrative has been distorted, at least in Mark and still more in Luke, so as to imply a belief in magic, of which he also finds traces in the incidents of the shadow of Peter (Acts v, 15) and S. Paul's handkerchief (xix, 12). 'We are definitely in the domain of apocryphal narrative where the miraculous power is completely independent of all connection with the spiritual and moral personality of him who, without his own knowledge, is the cause of the miracle.' In conclusion, he adds : 'If we are not very much mistaken, this version of Luke's is at bottom only the effect of a misunderstanding or, if you prefer, the concrete expression of an idea very simple and natural in itself ; the idea that from Jesus there emanated vivifying and restorative forces destined to repair the evils of humanity and capable of curing the infirmities that afflict them (cp. Matt. xi, 5). This last sentence is perfectly true, and it is only necessary to press it to see the accusation of magic vanish. We have in this statement simply what S. Luke himself affirms (vi, 19) : "Virtue went out from him and healed them all." '

We may just recall, for its own sake, the mythological interpretation given to this cure by the Valentinians, who wished to see in it the fall and restoration by the Saviour of the twelfth æon (Irenæus, III, 20–23). Similarly there is Eusebius' story (H.E., VII, 17) of what he had seen at Paneas about the woman with the issue of blood, and of the statue that had been raised to our Lord.

As already at Naim and again later at Bethania, death here is tamed by a single word spoken with supreme authority, without a single prayer, or prolonged efforts, as in the cases of raising from the dead performed by the prophets of old. It is enough for Jesus to command. Yet in this very exercise of sovereign power the utmost simplicity prevailed. In the midst of the general stupefaction He orders those present to give the child something to eat and then withdraws, enjoining the strictest silence about what had taken place. Amidst the impressionable crowd of Capharnaum such a miracle would cause too much excitement, and Jesus, who felt the need of preparing souls by slow stages for the truth, exacted secrecy and secured it, so far as He could. If His instructions were observed, people would think that the child was only asleep and had been awakened by the Lord ; only the parents, from whom the truth could not be hid, and the three Apostles, our Lord's confidants in so many mysteries, would know that a miracle had taken place. As to whether the secret was kept for long, we know nothing ; it may well be feared that the parents could not contain their joy and spoke freely about it ; still Jesus preferred to run this risk and to save the child.

IV. Nazareth and the Lake towns.

In the preceding pages we have followed the beginning and progress of the Gospel preaching in Galilee. This was marked first by the early miracles and the choice of the Apostles, then by the unfolding of the New Law in the Sermon on the Mount ; and lastly, by the preaching of the kingdom and the miracles that accompanied it.

This is the part of our Lord's life most full of happiness and success. The Apostles give themselves to His service with enthusiasm ; the people press around His path full of admiring wonder at His teaching, and at His miracles still more. This soil of Galilee, so long barren, began to fructify with a new life. It was the fulfilment of the prophecy joyfully recalled by S. Matthew : 'The people that sat in darkness have seen a great light.'

And yet, in this field where the corn rises with so much promise, we can already see the cockle spring up as well. The jealousy of the Pharisees was in no way disarmed. Not only from the neighbouring towns but from Jerusalem itself

they came, spying, opposing, blaspheming: while the crowd acclaimed the Master, these went on repeating that He was possessed of the devil, and that it was by Beelzebub that He cast the devils out. In the face of these atrocious calumnies the people began to waver. Not yet do they turn from Him whose works are so marvellous and whose words have such power to guide and quell, but they no longer resist these false shepherds, whose power they fear and to whose traditional authority, so long uncontested, they feel they must submit. This disquieting change of attitude had already made itself felt in the incidents we have described. But it was at Nazareth that the real conflict was to break out.

S. Matthew (xiii, 53–54) puts this new preaching of our Lord immediately after the parables; S. Mark (vi, 1–6), immediately after the cure of the woman with the issue of blood and the raising of Jairus' daughter; the two miracles being closely connected, in Mark's account, with the parables. In both cases, therefore, the succession of facts is nearly the same. The two accounts are strictly parallel, and what differences of emphasis exist are such as appear in many other places besides. The lines of the picture are more definite in S. Mark; there, Jesus is 'the carpenter;' 'He could not do any miracles;' 'He wondered because of their unbelief.' S. Luke does not record the episode in this particular place. On the other hand, he does relate a visit to Nazareth, at the beginning of the Galilean ministry, of which, as occurring just then, neither Matthew nor Mark has anything to say.

"And Jesus returned in the power of the spirit, into Galilee: and the fame of Him went out through the whole country. And He taught in their synagogues and was magnified by all. And He came to Nazareth, where He was brought up: and He went into the synagogue, according to His custom, on the Sabbath day: and He rose up to read. And the book of Isaias the prophet was delivered unto Him. And as He unfolded the book, He found the place where it was written: The spirit of the Lord is upon Me. Wherefore He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor: He hath sent Me to heal the contrite of heart. To preach deliverance to the captives and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and

the day of reward. And when He had folded the book, He restored it to the minister and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them : This day is fulfilled this Scripture in your ears. And all gave testimony to Him. And they wondered at the words of grace that proceeded from His mouth. And they said : Is not this the Son of Joseph? And He said to them : Doubtless you will say to Me this similitude : Physician, heal Thyself. As great things as we have heard done in Capharnaum, do also here in Thy own country. And He said : Amen, I say to you, that no prophet is accepted in his own country. In truth I say to you, there were many widows in the days of Elias in Israel, when heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there was a great famine throughout all the earth. And to none of them was Elias sent, but to Sarepta of Sidon, to a widow woman. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet : and none of them was cleansed but Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, hearing these things, were filled with anger. And they rose up and thrust Him out of the city : and they brought Him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built : that they might cast Him down headlong. But He passing through the midst of them, went His way.' (Luke iv, 14–30.)

A single reading of this passage will be enough to show that we have here a more circumstantial account than in the other Synoptics. We recognize the hand of the evangelist to whom we owe the stories of Nazareth, evidently guided here, as in the infancy narratives, by an eye-witness, probably our Blessed Lady herself. Still, we can easily detect certain common features, e.g., not only the unbelief of the people of Nazareth, but their comments as well : ' Is not this the son of Joseph ? ' and our Lord's own comment on the affair : ' no man is accepted in his own country.' On the other hand, the chronology is obviously different. In their attempt to harmonize the different facts, scholars differ among themselves. Levesque,[1] for example, has fused into one narrative two visits to Nazareth, in the first of which the people are astonished ; in the second, hostile. Lagrange is of opinion that there is no room for a double

[1] *Les quatre Evangiles*, pp. 56–58.

preaching at Nazareth, and this seems to us the more likely view. This single visit must be assigned to the date given by S. Matthew and S. Mark. No doubt it is possible to hold with Godet and Plummer that the miracles at Capharnaum, recalled by the people of Nazareth, were worked by Jesus during the few days that followed the miracle of Cana, but this is certainly no more than a gratuitous assumption after all ; the whole passage is easier to understand if we follow the chronology of S. Matthew and S. Mark. On this hypothesis we may say that S. Luke has put this narrative at the beginning of the Galilean ministry to make plain from the very beginning the course that the history was to take : the favourable reception at first, and the violent opposition of the last few weeks. It may be said, without fear of contradiction, that S. Luke's narrative is so vivid and detailed that the scene seems to take place before our very eyes.[1]

All three evangelists record the scene at the service on the Sabbath day. No doubt there was a good deal of curiosity about our Lord even at Nazareth, but it was kept within bounds by the contemptuous attitude which the people of the little town chose to take up. Did not they know, better than anyone else, this 'prophet' who was followed with such enthusiasm by the people of the lake? At last the Sabbath came, and everyone went to the synagogue. As our Lord entered He looked at the familiar building where so often during thirty years He had come to pray and listen to the word of God and the homilies of the scribes. And He recognized all the people as they crowded in, filling the benches below and the galleries above. Not only did His supernatural knowledge pierce to their very consciences, but manifold impressions of the past suddenly revived in His mind, bringing before Him the good faith perhaps, but also the vulgarity, the selfishness and the hardness of heart of these poor folk among whom He had grown up. For thirty years He had lived there, while only His Holy Mother and S. Joseph knew who He really was ; today the eyes of all are fixed upon Him as they watch between admiration and mistrust.

[1] Only one or two features are added by S. Matthew and S. Mark. The fact that Jesus was followed by His disciples, omitted by S. Matthew, is noted by S. Mark, to whom, throughout this section, this training meant so much. No doubt in their own lack of success with the Jews it would be useful for the Apostles to remember how poor a reception Jesus had received among 'his own.'

The service began with the profession of faith, followed by the prayer and blessing ; then came the reading of the law, the portions read being fixed in advance for the whole year. This was followed by the Haphtarah, or reading from the prophets : 'the text read by Jesus (Isaias lxi, 1 ff.) has never been part of the official Haphtarah. If, then, Jesus took it as His text, this is proof that at this time the Maphtir was still free to choose what passage from the prophets he would.'[1]

The text was taken from Isaias lxi, 1, together with lviii, 6. Probably the words 'to set at liberty them that are bruised,' occurring in the inserted passage, was added by our Lord in the course of His Sermon and not in the reading itself. Normally the Haphtarah consisted of twenty-one verses, but the number could be reduced to seven, five, or even three, if the reading was followed by an exposition or homily. The passage quoted by S. Luke contains only a verse and a half, together with a few words from lviii, 6 ; probably this was not the whole passage read by Jesus, but the text that He repeated at the beginning of His sermon, illustrated by comparison with a neighbouring text of Isaias, according to a method familiar to the Jews, by which a whole series of sacred texts might be threaded together like a rope of pearls.

This prophecy of Isaias was especially dear to our Lord, and He had already used it in connection with Himself in His reply to S. John the Baptist's messengers. 'Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen : the blind see, the lame walk . . . the poor have the Gospel preached to them . . .' (Matt. xi, 5). He interprets it in the same way now, and with still more solemn emphasis : every detail of the scene is graven on the memory of the witness, probably our Blessed Lady, who would have passed on her impression to the evangelist himself. Then, having rolled up the scroll, returned it to the *hazzan*, and sat down,[2] while all eyes were fixed upon Him, our Lord began His discourse with the simple words : 'This day is fulfilled this Scripture in your ears.'

Few can imagine the thrill of emotion that would have passed through the whole crowd. The Blessed Virgin was

[1] Billerbeck, IV, p. 170 ; cp. the same author's whole Excursus, *Der altjüdische Synagogengottesdienst*, on Luke, iv, 16 ff. ; IV, pp. 153–188.

[2] Moore, *Judaism*, I, p. 301, n. 1 : 'The description corresponds accurately to the usage of the Synagogue as we find it in the Mishnah and later texts.'

there, in the synagogue which she had attended in silence and patience for so many years. At last had come the hour of the manifestation of the Son of God, and a great joy must have been in her soul, mingled with a great anguish, when she thought of what the attitude of those present was likely to be—neighbours, friends, kinsmen as they were. Would they let themselves be touched, or would they stiffen their necks and harden their hearts?

The first impression seemed favourable: 'And all gave testimony to Him.' They were moved by His words, subdued by the reputation of His miracles; perhaps, too, won by the memory of those first thirty years of His life, so humble and obscure, but which must have deeply impressed sincere and generous souls. But they wondered, all the same; they appreciated these words of grace, but they were surprised that it was from His lips that they should fall. 'Is not this the son of Joseph?' Already we sense the suspicion stressed more by S. Matthew and S. Mark. 'How came this man by this wisdom and miracles? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His Mother called Mary, and His brethren James and Joseph and Simon and Jude? And His sisters, are they not all with us?' Most certainly the logic is quaint enough. Later, we shall find S. Hilary, in commenting on S. John's Gospel, rightly expressing his admiration of the exalted wisdom of this fisherman, and asserting that the illumination of his intelligence was a greater miracle than the raising of a man from the dead. Much better than a fourth-century writer could our Lord's fellow-townsmen measure the distance that separated His preaching days from His childhood and youth: 'How knoweth this man letters, having never learnt?' But the contrast this made did not fill them with admiration at His supernatural knowledge, but rather with misunderstanding of it: if we may dare so to put it, Jesus was already classified in their minds. He was a carpenter, whose whole past and family they knew well; strangers might be dazzled by Him; they, never.

We should want to be able to reconstitute the whole of our Saviour's discourse to follow the change that took place in His hearers' minds: but Luke has preserved for us only the beginning and the end. At first they were gripped by an impression of charm and power; but soon they are disconcerted by a messianic ideal so new to them; from that

point they follow Him only hesitatingly and, at the same time, the questions and objections begin. During the preaching in the synagogue the audience were silent enough, but afterwards they commenced interrogating the preacher, and quite a discussion began to weave itself around the points that they raised. It was then that the opposition began to make itself felt. Besides, we must not forget that Jesus' own relations did not believe in Him, and that only a short time before they had gone to Capharnaum to draw Him out of a state of mystic exaltation, as they believed it to be. It is therefore not surprising that this unbelief of His own kinsmen should have reacted on the fellow-townsmen of our Lord. Then we must remember His humble extraction, the trade He had followed, the fact that His relations were known to everybody and were present at the moment; further, as always, they asked for signs and, again as always, Christ refused them, since they were not solicited by a humble faith, but demanded by an insolent curiosity.

And it was then that, widening the discussion, Jesus showed His fellow-citizens that the very thing that they were doing at the moment was only a new instance of an already familiar judgement of Almighty God. 'No prophet is accepted in his own country.' And then, invoking the example of Elias and Eliseus, He reminded them that it was for the benefit of strangers and not of members of their own race that the greatest miracles of these two prophets had been wrought. It was to a woman of Sidon that Elias had been sent, and it was a Syrian whom Eliseus had cured.

Then the storm broke. The prospect of their own reprobation and the election of the Gentiles is one that the Jews have never been able to endure. When S. Paul was explaining his position in the Temple, the Hebrews present allowed him to tell the whole story of his conversion. But at last, he reached the vision of Christ that he had seen at Jerusalem, giving him the command: 'Go, for unto the Gentiles afar off will I send thee'; no sooner had they heard these words than the Jews, who up to that point had listened quietly enough, began with shouts of rage to demand his death (Acts xxii, 22). This story told by Luke in the Acts[1] is the best commentary on the Gospel incident before us now.

For here the indignation was no less. Rising in an access of rage they drove our Lord tumultuously out of the town and

[1] Cp. Acts xiii, 46–50.

would have thrown Him headlong over the mountain-side ; but His hour was not come, and so He passed through the midst of them and went His way.

On this Plummer remarks :

'The addition of διὰ μέσου is for emphasis, and seems to imply that there is something miraculous in His passing through the very midst of those who were intending to slay Him, and seemed to have Him entirely in their power. They had asked for a miracle, and this was the miracle granted to them. Those who think that it was His determined look or personal majesty which saved Him, have to explain why this did not prevent them from casting Him out of the synagogue. It seems better, with Meyer and former commentators, to understand a miracle dependent on the will of Jesus ; cp. John xviii, 6 ; Dan. vi, 22. John viii, 59, is different. On that occasion Jesus stole away in flight.'

The scene of this miracle has been variously identified, but an ancient tradition locates it on the Mount of the Precipice, about a mile and a quarter south-west of Nazareth. On the road to this precipice, to the left as we leave Nazareth, we notice a chapel, replacing a more ancient sanctuary, known as Our Lady of Terror. An old tradition tells us that it was there that Mary, full of terror, saw the Jews returning from the Mount of the Precipice without our Lord ; ready to faint, she leant on the side of the rock which, in order to shelter her, partly opened of its own accord.

Not only this legend, but the very localization of the precipice, is contested to-day. But all these uncertainties are of little importance. The exact spot may be sought a few hundred yards to the east or west. The significance of the incident is the same, and it is that which matters. The legend of Our Lady of Terror may be called in question ; but our Lady's feelings in these tragic circumstances are not open to doubt, and appear clearly enough in the narrative of S. Luke. We remember the proceedings of our Lord's 'brethren' at Capharnaum. Mary had to join them, and even then we seem to be conscious of her feelings in contact with the obstinate incredulity of those nearest by blood to Himself. But to-day's incident is much more painful. This attempt of our Lord to win the people at Nazareth, possibly renewed in various circumstances, is met by a brutal hostility. The little town where Jesus had grown up, where Mary still lived, whose inhabitants were composed

very largely of His relations and who were all His acquaintances in any case, definitely rejected the Lord, and thus merited itself to be rejected forever. A tragic rupture indeed, and one that must have been to Our Lady one of the most poignant griefs of her life! Still she remained at her post, and was able at last to win for her Divine Son, if not the whole of the unbelieving population of the place, at least those who were nearest to Him according to the flesh.

And it was painful for Jesus, too. When He left Nazareth, at the beginning of His ministry, He left behind Him all familiar spots associated with His early life, all those amongst whom He had grown up; but at least He kept the memory of the cordial relationship that normally obtains between neighbours and one's own kin. But now all that is shattered. Everything and everybody has rejected Him. The hill from which He had so often admired the wide horizon that stretches from Carmel to Hermon is nothing to Him now but the mountain of the precipice; the people, vulgar and selfish no doubt, but generally seeming friendly and good, are now only fanatical enemies, who can bear the sight of Him no more. Once more it must be said: 'He came unto His own: and His own received Him not.'

Later on S. Paul would write to the Romans:

> 'I speak the truth in Christ: I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost: That I have great sadness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren: who are my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites.' (Romans ix, 1–4.)

How much more keenly than the Apostle must our Lord have felt all this at Nazareth on this tragic day!

Mark tells us: '. . . He could not do any miracles there, only that He cured a few that were sick, laying His hands upon them. And He wondered because of their unbelief. . . .' A cruel surprise indeed, to be faced with unbelief like this, paralysing His own power. We know how Jesus exacted faith of those who asked Him for miracles or, at least, in default of perfect faith, that beginning of faith that, conscious of its own weakness, is ready to pray: 'I do believe, Lord. Help my unbelief' (Mark ix, 23). But there is nothing of that kind here, only haughty incredulity, full of confident judgement and contempt; Jesus could do

nothing for that. He wonders at this hardness of heart ; no doubt His infinite knowledge penetrated to its very depths ; but in His human soul, whenever He met this combination of pride and folly, to which He could never become accustomed, there was always an indignant surprise. So it was that Jeremias cried of old :

> 'Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this : and ye gates thereof, be very desolate, saith the Lord. For My people have done two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' (Jeremias ii, 12, 13.)

So was our Blessed Lord rejected by all the three towns which He had especially sanctified by His close connection with them ; Bethlehem was the scene of His birth, but He had soon to be taken elsewhere on account of Herod's resolve to put Him to death. Nazareth saw Him grow up and He lived there for thirty years ; and then, when He returned as the Messias, it needed a miracle on His part to save Him from the fury of the Nazarenes. At Jerusalem the miracle does not take place, and the Holy City, the scene of so much of His preaching and so many of His miracles, drove Him beyond its walls and put Him to death.

Nor were these three towns, laden with so many graces and guilty of so many crimes, much worse than the towns of the lake. In these, too, Christ had taught much, and they had witnessed many of His mighty works, and all this had been of little profit to them. And our Lord's last words to them were a curse :

> 'Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein were done the most of His miracles, for that they had not done penance. Woe to thee, Corozain ! Woe to thee, Bethsaida ! For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgement than for you. And thou, Capharnaum, shalt thou be exalted up to heaven ? Thou shalt go down even unto hell. For if in Sodom had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in thee, perhaps it had remained unto this day. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgement than for thee.' (Matt. xi, 20–24. Cp. Luke x, 13–15.)

These words of our Lord, with all their pathos, remained graven on the Christians' memory, as their presence in the two Gospels shows : but the date at which they were spoken seems to have been kept less faithfully in mind. S. Matthew connects them with the Baptist's deputation to Christ, while in S. Luke they follow immediately on the instructions given to the disciples by our Lord. In both cases the link is an artificial one. Fortunately we do not need to look further. Without wishing to be too definite about facts beyond our knowledge, it is enough to say that these words of Christ belong manifestly to the last days of His ministry on the shores of the lake. They can certainly be assimilated to our Lord's preaching at Nazareth. In either instance we have towns, copiously dowered with graces from our Lord, unfaithful, to Him, and by rejecting Him, bringing condemnation upon themselves. The lake towns had never been guilty of the violent hostility of Nazareth towards our Blessed Lord ; yet, it seems, their responsibility was greater. It was from them that Christ had chosen His Apostles, it was in them that He had worked the majority of His miracles and preached His New Law. Nor could they plead, like Nazareth, lowly memories of His childhood, which was unknown to them. To them He had appeared only as the miracle worker and the Messias, and they had despised Him as such. As men who only yesterday had heard the Baptist's message, they rejoiced for a moment in the new light, then they let it pass without any stirring of their indifference, without any effort to enter into the kingdom that He preached. Yet His preaching has enlightened the whole world, and His miracles have converted it ; while they who heard His voice and were in physical contact with His works, they whom He would have raised to heaven, have let themselves fall into hell. No one to-day can walk by the lake side without hearing the echo of these dread curses of our Lord. Corozain has disappeared without leaving a trace behind ; of Bethsaida only certain doubtful ruins remain ; Capharnaum, the opulent city of commerce, which in our Lord's time saw the caravans of Hauran and Phenice flowing through her gates is to-day nothing but an area for excavations. The whole country-side which Josephus described with enthusiasm as the richest and the most fertile in the world, nothing short of an earthly paradise in itself, is utterly barren and deserted to-day.

So there once more, on the borders of the lake, as at Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jerusalem, the Gospel has passed by, rejected by men whose kingdom has been taken from them to be given to those in whose hands it was destined to bear fruit. There is the mystery of blindness for the Jews and of grace for us; and this disposition of Providence will become ever clearer throughout the remaining ministry of Christ.

V. The Mission of the Apostles.

S. Mark, immediately after relating the rebuff at Nazareth, continues his narrative in the following words:

> 'And He called the twelve and began to send them two and two and gave them power over unclean spirits. And He commanded them that they should take nothing for the way, but a staff only: no scrip, no bread, nor money in their purse. But to be shod with sandals, and that they should not put on two coats. And He said to them: Wheresoever you shall enter into an house, there abide till you depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you nor hear you: going forth from thence, shake off the dust from your feet for a testimony to them. And going forth they preached that men should do penance: And they cast out many devils and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them.' (Mark vi, 7–13.)

The circumstances surrounding this episode make our Lord's intention sufficiently clear. For a long time now He had attached the twelve to Himself, multiplying His miracles and the occasions of His preaching, taking them with Him everywhere to initiate them into His ministry and into the spirit that was its driving force. And it was His Will that they should be witnesses of His check at Nazareth so that they might learn, in the teeth of what opposition their own ministry would have to make its way. And now He sends them across Galilee, as a prelude to their future work.

When relating the choice of the Twelve Apostles, we observed that such an institution was a new thing in the world. No doubt the Jewish rabbis were accustomed to group around them disciples, whom they trained by daily instruction and by the example of their own lives. But in this way they only formed a college of privileged pupils, who might have been at the same time depositaries of their

power and continuers of their work, though in fact the rabbis had neither work to entrust to them nor powers to hand on. But Jesus had gathered around Him these twelve men whom He called Apostles : a title which was about to become a reality, for they were really 'sent.' And this mission was more of a novelty than the initial choice itself. Thus to send all over the country not only missionaries, but exorcists and wonder-workers, was a thing that no one before had been able or had even claimed to do. It is true that many of the prophets had had the gift of miracles, but this was only for themselves, without any power to delegate to others a power of which God remained Master alone. When Elias was on the point of disappearing from the earth, his disciple Eliseus asked, as a parting favour, that Elias' own spirit might come upon him. And Elias replied : 'Thou hast asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, thou shalt have what thou hast asked : but if thou see me not, thou shalt not have it' (4 Kings ii, 10). That is to say he had no power to leave at will to another a power that was not his to give ; it was a matter for the good pleasure of God, of which the providential circumstance mentioned would be the sign. A little later when the Sunamitess came to implore Eliseus to have pity on her dead son, the prophet handed Giezi his own staff for him to go and lay it upon the face of the child ; and yet Giezi had to return with the sad tidings : 'The child is not risen.' But in sending His Apostles, Christ was not, like Eliseus, making an experiment of uncertain success ; in all security He was investing them with powers of which He had complete disposal as Master and Lord.

Among our Lord's instructions, as given by S. Matthew and completed by the other Synoptics, the first is that the twelve are to be sent out two and two. And, as a matter of fact, if we examine the list of the Apostles as given, for example, in S. Matthew x, 2, we shall find that their names go in pairs ; Peter and Andrew ; James and John ; Philip and Bartholomew ; Thomas and Matthew ; James and Thaddæus ; Simon and Judas. Of course, in this list the grouping is partly dictated by family relations, but we notice, too, that our Lord's instructions had introduced new groups of two, for example, Peter and John, whom we find associated not only in the Gospel, but also in the Acts, whether in the Temple or in missionary work in Samaria. Later, while

the Apostles were fasting and praying at Antioch, the Holy Ghost bade them : ' Separate me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have taken them ' (xiii, 2). In their first missionary journey, such a grouping was even more necessary to the Apostles than it became after Pentecost : without experience, and as yet without the gift of the Holy Ghost, they could in this way at least be a support to one another.

Further, their field of action was strictly defined (Matt. x, 5, 6) : ' Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles, and into the city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' Evidently these instructions are not to be taken as setting limits for the future development of the Gospel ; but merely for their temporary mission which, like our Lord's own preaching, was directed only to the children of Israel. Its purpose was to proclaim the kingdom of God and to call sinners to repentance :

> ' And going, preach, saying : The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils. Freely have you received : freely give.' (Matt. x, 7, 8 ; cp. Luke, ix, 2.)

It was merely preparatory in character and analogous to that of the Precursor of our Lord. Not yet were the Apostles charged to make Christ known—for one thing, as yet they knew Him so poorly themselves—but only by preaching the kingdom of God to prepare souls to receive it and at the same time to perform the miraculous works by which its advent was to be marked.

The last words of the passage from S. Matthew that we have just quoted, reveal the disinterested motives that our Lord required of them in doing this work. When He called them to follow Him, He bade them leave all, nor were they to create new ties now, by taking advantage of the supernatural gifts that they had received from their Master's hand. They were even to neglect all preparations for the journey, and to set out just as they were without bread, wallet, money, change of clothes, or shoes to their feet. These instructions vary in detail in the two Gospels, but the sense is always the same.[1] We must not cling literally to

[1] Maldonatus writes justly : ' The evangelists (Matthew and Mark) made use of contradictory terms to express the same thought : both have recorded the sense of our Lord's words but not the literal mode of expression that He employed. He meant to instruct the disciples to take with

every detail of expression, but must keep in mind the purpose that our Lord had in view; to teach His Apostles detachment and confidence in God. It is the great lesson that He will bring to their minds on the last day of His life: 'When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes did you want anything? But they said: Nothing' (Luke xxii, 35).

But for these instructions there was another motive, too. Our Lord's command had been that they should 'not possess gold, nor silver, nor money . . . nor scrip . . . nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff,' adding shortly after: 'For the workman is worthy of his meat.' Certainly the Apostles must trust in their Heavenly Father, but they ought, none the less, to be able to count on the material assistance of those to whom they preached. Later, S. Paul asserts this right in no halting terms, although, in order to secure his independence, he never cared to use it for himself. 'If,' he says, 'we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we reap your carnal things?' (1 Cor. ix, 11). No doubt the exercise of such a right is always a delicate matter, and can be the cause of many abuses, tending to compromise either the disinterestedness or the independence of the Apostles; but when the dispositions required by Christ are present, that is, detachment on the part of those who receive, and a spirit of faith in those who give, such an exchange of service forges a new link drawing pastors and faithful closer to each other, and securing to both the happiness and pride of helping each other in the Lord: 'It is a more blessed thing to give than to receive.' That is why Christ Himself was willing to owe His own sustenance and that of His little flock to those holy women whom Luke represents as attached to His service from the Galilean ministry right on to Calvary itself.

How such hospitality should be given and received was outlined by Christ Himself.

them only what they needed for immediate use. This Matthew expresses by making our Lord forbid them to take with them even a staff; a thing that is usually found in the possession even of a poor man. Mark represents Him as saying: "take only a staff," for he that has that alone has all that is necessary. So Jacob said (Gen. xxxii, 10): "With my staff I passed over this Jordan." Similarly, the French say: "*s'en aller à beau pied sans lance*," as well as "*s'en aller à pied avec un baston à la main*." And we can say the same of the other instructions too. Jesus did not forbid an upper garment such as He wore Himself (John xix, 23), but only that they should provide themselves with a change of clothes to be used when the season changed; Luke iii, 11: ". . . He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none. . . ."'

> 'And into whatsoever city or town you shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy: and there abide till you go thence. And when you come into the house, salute it, saying: Peace be to this house. And if that house be worthy, your peace shall return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words; going forth out of that house or city shake off the dust from your feet. Amen I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgement than for that city.' (Matt. x, 11–15.)

All these directions explain themselves. Christ's ambassadors must act with circumspection, and not honour an unworthy host by accepting his hospitality; once they have in this way taken up their abode, for the time being, in any house, they are to remain there and not keep running from one place to another, a proceeding likely to offend their hosts and lay themselves open to the suspicion of being too fastidious or difficult to please. When they enter a house they must invoke peace upon it, using the formula 'Peace be to you' with which Jesus Himself loved to greet His Apostles. In their mouth, as in His own, it was never an empty formula; not only did they invoke peace but they actually gave it. If their hosts were unworthy of this peace, it would return to themselves, by which we may understand either that it would descend effectively upon them, or that, through man's fault, it would return to them void.[1]

Analogies have been found or imagined between these instructions of our Lord and Jewish customs of the period.[2] All such comparisons are weak, and in any case unimportant. What concerns the Gospel very much more is the assurance with which Christ charged men, still so far from perfect, with so important a mission and such far-reaching powers. It was *after* this experience, and not before, that the two sons of Zebedee wanted to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans who would not receive our Lord; and still later that they asked for the first places in the kingdom. And as for their knowledge of their Master, it was far from perfect still, seeing that it was only at Cæsarea Philippi that Peter recognized Him as the Messias, the Son of God, and that Jesus saw in this confession a revelation from the Father in heaven. And it was to half-converted men like this that

[1] Cp. Isaias lv, 11: '. . . my word . . . shall not return to me void. . . .'

[2] In particular by Edersheim, I, 643.

Jesus entrusted the power to cast out demons, to heal the sick, and to raise the dead; and be it remembered that Judas himself was a sharer in all these powers. The only conclusion from such facts is that Almighty God dispenses His gifts with sovereign freedom, nor fears to enshrine the most heavenly graces in frail vessels of earth.

VI. S. John the Baptist's death.

Borne by the Apostles, the Gospel of the kingdom spread over Galilee so that our Lord's name, being 'made manifest' entered the palace walls and troubled the conscience of Herod the king.

'And King Herod heard (for his name was made manifest), and he said: John the Baptist is risen again from the dead; and therefore mighty works shew forth themselves in him. And others said: It is Elias. But others said: It is a prophet, as one of the prophets. Which Herod hearing, said: John whom I beheaded, he is risen again from the dead. For Herod himself had sent and apprehended John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, the wife of Philip his brother, because he had married her. For John said to Herod: It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. Now Herodias laid snares for him and was desirous to put him to death: and could not. For Herod feared John, knowing him to be a just and holy man, and kept him: and when he heard him, did many things. And he heard him willingly. And when a convenient day was come, Herod made a supper for his birthday, for the princes and tribunes and chief men of Galilee. And when the daughter of the same Herodias had come in and had danced and pleased Herod and them that were at table with him, the king said to the damsel: Ask of me what thou wilt and I will give it thee. And he swore to her: Whatsoever thou shalt ask I will give thee, though it be the half of my kingdom. Who, when she was gone out, said to the mother: What shall I ask? But she said: The head of John the Baptist. And when she was come in immediately with haste to the king, she asked, saying: I will that forthwith thou give me in a dish the head of John the Baptist. And the king was struck sad. Yet because of his oath and because of them that were with him at table, he would not displease

her. But sending an executioner, he commanded that his head should be brought in a dish. And he beheaded him in the prison and brought his head in a dish and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. Which his disciples hearing, came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.' (Mark vi, 14–29.) The same story is abridged in Matthew (xiv, 1–12); Luke gives a short notice of it (ix, 7–9).

Here we have one of the most poignant tragedies of the whole Gospel story. In it, as described here, Renan (*Les Evangiles*, p. 116, n. 3) sees 'the sole really historic passage in all the Gospels taken together.' To-day, however, most 'independent' scholars believe that we have here a popular legend[1] irreconcilable with historic realities,[2] and, in particular, with the testimony of Josephus.[3]

Herod appears here as we already know him, irresolute, debauched, superstitious, cruel. He profited by his prisoner's presence to ask him questions, although each of these interviews left him in a state of greater perplexity than before. Still he returns time after time, curious to hear the Precursor speak, just as, later, he will be equally anxious to see the miracles of our Lord.

But Herodias knew nothing of vacillations of this kind. She was wholly engrossed in her vengeance and the fears that inspired it. She knew the Tetrarch's weakness, and feared the prophet's influence over him, and was correspondingly anxious to be freed from anxiety and at the same time to have glutted her passion for revenge. The anniversary of Herod's birth furnished the occasion that she sought, and she took it.

[1] Goguel, *Jean-Baptiste*, pp. 53 ff.

[2] The 'Philip' spoken of in Mark vi, 17, is not the tetrarch Philip who later married Salome, daughter of Herodias. The first husband of Herodias was Herod, son of Herod the Great and Marianne. The question is whether he also was called Philip. This is at least possible. Cp. Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ*, I, pp. 339 ff.; Buzy, *S. Jean-Baptiste*, pp. 345–7; Lagrange, *S. Marc*, p. 158.

[3] Josephus' testimony has been quoted *supra*, p. 206. Herod's motives are presented differently by Josephus and Mark, but the two versions are not mutually exclusive. Probably Herod took umbrage at John's proceedings and at his influence over the people; and even if he had been slow to move, Herodias knew how to awaken and keep alive his suspicions. It is further objected that according to Josephus, Herod had John imprisoned in order that he might kill him; while the motive assigned in S. Mark is his protection against the threats of Herodias. This second interpretation is forced. Mark certainly does not say that Herod had John imprisoned in order to protect him; only that, when John was in prison, Herod defended him against the homicidal intentions of Herodias.

Goguel, following Mark, is indignant at the part that Salome is made to play in these proceedings. 'These dances belonged to prostitutes, and it is scarcely likely that a proud Herodian princess would have sent her daughter to dance at a gathering of half-besotted men. Such a thing is scarcely credible except to those who have never witnessed the dances of the East.' This is certainly to take too seriously the dignity of this 'proud Herodian princess,' while, so far as the oriental dances are concerned, they were not, at least among the Jews, the lascivious exhibition here supposed. 'The dances of the ancient world,' writes Reuss (368), 'were not amusements of the social world but of the theatre, and largely mimetic and figured in character, representing characters, situations and passions, rather like our own ballets of to-day. . . . With the Jews and the Semitic peoples generally, there was for the most part nothing unseemly about them, and they sometimes even formed part of religious ceremonies. Still, we shall not be mistaken if we say that the present exhibition is one proof of the growing depravation of manners in the century in question, and of the syncretism that led each nationality to borrow the worst elements in another.' That this immoral tendency should have raged at Herod's court and infected Herodias and her daughter will surprise no one to whom the sad history of that family is known. And as for the probability of the request made and its response, we have only to recall a well-known anecdote from the classics; where in the *De Senectute* (xii, 42) Cato hears the story of how Cicero drove L. Flaminius from the Senate: 'Being proconsul in Gaul, Flaminius, in the course of a banquet, had been implored by a courtesan to have one of the prisoners who were in his keeping at the time decapitated; and he granted her request.' The same story is related by Plutarch, in his life of Flaminius, in greater detail. In this version the woman, in the middle of the meal, told the consul that she had never seen a head that had been cut off. To please her, Flaminius had a condemned man decapitated, and the head brought to her at the table. Surely, if the Romans could act thus in Cato's time, we need not be astonished that Herod should do the same. And we can find yet another instance of the same kind of thing in the stories of Xerxes' love affairs and his imprudent promise, as related by Herodotus (IX, 108–13). The second of these stories of banquets and promises is very

much to the point. When the king was celebrating his birthday by a banquet, the queen, Amestris, asked him to give into her power her rival who was also her sister-in-law; and the king found himself forced to consent.[1]

Salome would have been fifteen at the time; and such a performance on the part of the young princess would have been a pleasing sight for Herod's blasé courtiers and for the king himself. With characteristic vaunting, he delivered himself of his promise and oath, and he was taken at his word. He dared not retract what he had said; to a man of weak and depraved character, conventional propriety is more binding than the decalogue. Salome did not lose a moment and, urged on by her mother, demanded the head of John; 'here, in a dish,' as she put it, to make sure of her victory and her revenge. And, a few minutes after, the guard returned carrying the prophet's head in a dish.

The Fathers have commented profusely on this tragic story; for example, S. Chrysostom, who was himself destined to be the victim of Eudoxia: 'What a horrible spectacle to see the bloodstained head brought in during the course of a meal! We shudder with horror, but not so Herod nor his evil wife. For this is characteristic of adulterous women. There is no being on earth so easily offended or so cruel . . . they are ready to kill anyone who stands in the way of their plans.'[2]

We know the penalty meted out by Providence for this heartless crime. Josephus himself tells us how the people saw in Antipas' defeat by the king of the Arabs a punishment for the Baptist's death, while a little later, Herodias, his evil genius, dragged him to Rome to ask the title of king. Exile was the only result of so imprudent a step; both Herod and his wife being banished to Lyons. (A.J., XVIII, vii, 2; B.J., II, ix, 6.)

We are the more likely to be affected by this tragedy when we remember that the wretch who subjected the Precursor to such indignity would soon have at his mercy the Son of God Himself. It was this adulterous and incestuous tyrant who made a mockery of our Lord and sent Him back to Pilate as a fool; a thing that a little later Jesus Himself

[1] Cp. H. Windisch, *Zum Gastmahl des Antipas*, *Z.n.t.W.*, XVIII, pp. 73–81.

[2] P.G., LVIII, 492. Cp. S. Ambrose, *De Virginibus*, III, 6; P.L., XVI, 228; S. Augustine, Serm. 317 (XXXVIII, 1406).

foretold to His Apostles when reminding them of John the Baptist's death : ' I say to you that Elias is already come : and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they had a mind. So also the Son of Man shall suffer from them ' (Matt. xvii, 12).

Indeed, we already feel by this time that the tyrant will not stop half-way in his evil course. As we have just seen, it is in connection with the Apostle's mission that Mark relates the Precursor's death. The excitement caused by their preaching had already its echoes within the palace, and Herod was asking himself who this new prophet could be : ' This John, whom I beheaded, he it is who has come to life ! ' Herod might have said. Luke records the same doubts in a slightly different form.[1]

In S. Luke's version we especially note the element of curiosity in Herod's mind. He loved to listen to the Precursor ; he wanted to see Christ, and rejoiced at the chance of doing so afforded him by our Lord's Passion ; but for him it was all nothing more than a pastime, and he was annoyed at our Lord's refusal to lend Himself to anything of the kind. ' Perhaps,' writes Godet (I, 434), ' S. Luke—or the author who is his source—obtained his information through one of the persons named in viii, 3, and Acts xiii, 1, whom Luke describes so exactly and who belonged to Herod's household.'

This curiosity of the tyrant was never to be satisfied. It does not seem that Jesus had ever penetrated into Tiberias, where Antipas lived. Not long before, in speaking of John the Baptist, He had asked the crowd : '. . . What went ye out to see ? A man clothed in soft garments ? Behold, they that are clothed in soft garments are in the household of kings.' Luxury of this kind, which the Baptist's austerity had condemned, was no less repugnant to the humility of Christ. The Precursor had only appeared before Herod to rebuke him, and then to be condemned to death ; and it was only as a prisoner that Christ was destined to appear before him.

[1] ' Now Herod, the tetrarch, heard of all things that were done by him. And he was in a doubt, because it was said by some that John was risen from the dead : but by other some, that Elias had appeared ; and by others, that one of the old prophets was risen again. And Herod said : John I have beheaded. But who is this of whom I hear such things ? And he sought to see him ' (Luke ix, 7–9).

VII. The Feeding of the Five Thousand.

The event that we have now to relate brings us back to S. John's narrative. No doubt here, as throughout his Gospel, John has chosen by preference the incidents which the Synoptics left on one side ; but at least the fresh details supplied by him here evidently belong to the events recorded by the other three. This is the only instance of such a harmony occurring in the period between our Lord's Baptism and Passion, and it is all the more precious for that. The date can be determined precisely enough : 'the pasch, the festival day of the Jews, was near at hand' (John vi, 4), and with this, certain hints given by the Synoptics agree : for example, the Apostles seat the crowd on the green grass (Mark vi, 39), a fact that presupposed spring. The connection of the incident with previous ones is not noticed by John, who merely says 'after these things,' but the chain of events appears more clearly in the Synoptics, where it seems that the motive of our Lord's retirement was fear of Herod (Matt. xiv, 13), and also the desire to give some chance of a rest to the Apostles, who had just returned from their mission, and who were still beset by the eager and excited crowd.

> 'And the apostles coming together unto Jesus, related to him all things that they had done and taught. And he said to them : Come apart into a desert place and rest a little. For there were many coming and going : and they had not so much as time to eat.' (Mark vi, 30, 31.)

This explanation is quite simple, and indeed has appeared too simple to some. 'The motive,' says Goguel, 'invoked to account for Jesus' desire of solitude is a little too paltry and improbable.'[1] Monnier's[2] explanation is this. 'Jesus invites (the Apostles) to take a little rest. It is easy to imagine that their ministry, being essentially one of healing, would have demanded a great expenditure of physical strength.' This is to substitute a quite fragile hypothesis for a perfectly clear fact. Part of the crowd had followed the Apostles from the districts in which they had been preaching as far as Capharnaum itself, and they continued to flow in from all sides : so that in the constant rush of visitors the

[1] Goguel, *Marc*, p. 143.
[2] *La notion de l'apostolat* (Paris, 1903), p. 111.

disciples had no time even to eat. So our Lord quite naturally and simply takes them aside.

'And going up into a ship, they went into a desert place apart. And they saw them going away; and many knew. And they ran flocking thither on foot from all the cities and were there before them.' (Mark vi, 32, 33.)

According to S. John it is clear that Christ crossed the lake to reach His Apostles. It has often been asked how the people could have preceded Him on foot to the same spot, but the difficulty vanishes if it be remembered that Capharnaum was at the northern extremity of the lake, and that to reach Bethsaida, which Luke (ix, 10) names as the town concerned, was scarcely shorter by water than by land.

This great rush of people is to be explained not only by the return of the Apostles, whose preaching would have stirred up the population of the neighbouring districts, but much more by the Passover feast, which was now close. Many pilgrims were already on the road, and they turned a little out of their way to see and hear our Lord. Moreover, the Precursor's recent death would have helped to make the popular emotion more general and intense. The commotion caused by John, and recorded by Josephus as well as by the evangelists, could not be stifled by his violent death: the indignation of the people was strong, and tended to raise still higher the hopes aroused by the preaching of Christ and His Apostles. In the territory to which He had retired, Jesus would have found a shelter from Herod's rage: Philip was already reigning there, and the Jordan formed the frontier between their two domains.

'And Jesus going out saw a great multitude; and He had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd. And He began to teach them many things.' (Mark vi, 34.)

This moving example of the Saviour's compassion reminded the disciples of many Old Testament passages in which Almighty God depicts the abandonment of His people.[1]

'As the shepherd visiteth his flock in the day when he shall be in the midst of his sheep that were scattered, so

[1] Num. xxvii, 17; 3 Kings xxii, 17; 2 Par. xviii, 16, and especially Ezech. xxxiv (quoted by Swete, *in hoc loco*).

will I visit My sheep and will deliver them out of all the places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. . . . I will feed My sheep and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost; and that which was driven away, I will bring again. And I will bind up that which was broken and I will strengthen that which was weak. . . . And they shall know that I the Lord their God am with them and that they are My people, the house of Israel: saith the Lord God. And you, my flocks, the flocks of my pasture are men: and I am the Lord your God, saith the Lord God.' (Ezech. xxxiv, 12, 15, 16, 30, 31.)

These texts with all their touching appeal were present to the memory of all; but the reality far surpassed their hopes, which could never have dared envisage this personal coming of God made man into the midst of His flock. In the same chapter from which these verses are taken, mention is made of 'my servant David,' who will be the only shepherd of this, Jehovah's flock; but once more, none would have dared imagine that this 'servant of David' was not merely the faithful shepherd appointed by Jehovah, but the Lord Himself, so moved with pity at the sight of His scattered flock that He would come from heaven to save them and bring them together once more.

Matthew and Luke add a detail to S. Mark's narrative: 'and He healed them who had need of healing.' So passed the day. Christ and His Apostles needed rest, and that was why they crossed the lake to seek a desert place; but Jesus could not rest when He saw the crowd, and His whole day was passed in teaching them, and healing those who had need of it.

And when night fell, the disciples approached our Lord. '. . . The hour,' they said, 'is now past. Send them away that they may buy themselves meat to eat.' A few details are added by S. John; as usual, he loved to distinguish individuals in the apostolic band, always represented by the Synoptics as a whole. Here, it is Philip of whom our Lord asks: 'Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?' And Philip replied: 'Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little.' Then Andrew, the brother of Simon, and Philip's friend (cp. John xii, 22), intervenes: 'There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves, and two fishes; but what are they among so many?' And yet by the insignificant victuals

of that boy, after they had passed through Christ's hands, the entire multitude were destined to be fed. The five barley-loaves and two small fish were nothing, and yet it was all that our Lord asked. He wanted the crowd to co-operate, however feebly, and above all He wished to arouse in the Apostles the spirit of caring for the people's needs. S. Cyril, in commenting on this narrative, recalls Moses' prayer in the desert :

> ' Whence should I have flesh to give to so great a multitude ? They weep against me, saying : Give us flesh that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people, because it is too heavy for me.' (Num. xi, 13, 14.)

So the Apostles began to learn something of the nature of the pastoral charge into which they had been initiated by our Lord. Later, they will find these formidable cares weighing heavily upon them ; but for the present they do not bear them alone ; the Good Shepherd is with them.

At our Lord's command, after arranging them in groups of fifty or a hundred, they make the people sit down ; so that the whole company are soon stretched on the thick and green grass.

> ' The Lord ruleth me : [or ' is my Shepherd '] and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture.' (Ps. xxii, 1–2.)

These words of the Psalm, here recalled by S. Cyril (453), are a good description of this meal in the Galilean countryside ; and our thoughts fly naturally to that other feast, which had so lately stained Macheron with blood. There is the whole difference between Christ and Herod. Here we have frugal simplicity, it is true, but at the same time all the purity and charm of nature in spring-time, which God had made and in which Jesus took delight. The barley-loaves, the two little salted fish, multiplied by Him are the food of the poor ; thus God gives to His own, as in like manner He had fed Elias, multiplying the meal and oil of the widow of Sarephta (3 Kings xvii, 14). Everyone's wants are met, and yet twelve basketfuls of the fragments are taken up. These travelling baskets or panniers formed the indispensable baggage of the Jew.[1] What is chiefly to

[1] Le Camus here recalls Juvenal (*Sat.*, III, 15) *quorum cophinus foenumque supellex ;* and Martial (*Epig.*, V, 17) who calls the Jews *cistiferi* (box-carriers).

be noticed here is this lesson of wise economy given even in the miracle itself. When man's imagination plays with omnipotence, it shows itself wasteful to the point of folly: when God makes use of it, He remains the wise God, enjoining prudence upon all.

And all this is the image and promise of a still greater miracle. In the Gospel narratives, and particularly in John, it is heralded by everything that takes place: the near approach of the Passover, the giving of thanks (eucharist) uttered by Jesus before the miracle, and then the miracle itself. Soon between the Apostles' hands there will be multiplied a still holier food, feeding and satisfying the whole multitude of those who believe.

At this particular point of the narrative, this symbolic significance of events was not yet apparent: what at least the Jews had seen was the miracle that had taken place under their very eyes. Many commentators are much embarrassed by this miracle to-day. By some it is recognized as 'the greatest and best-attested of all our Lord's nature-miracles' (Keim, II, 490), but it is a source of irritation to most writers outside the Church. K. Weiss (II, 200) makes the whole thing an affair of divination: Jesus begins the distribution of food with five loaves and two fishes, abandoning Himself to His Father's care, but still knowing that there were other provisions in the crowd, which were providentially brought to light in proportion as the need arose. Accordingly we have here simply a lesson of trust in God's Providence, and, at the same time, of beneficence and mutual aid. It is true that this explanation conflicts with the Gospel narrative, for it is clear that the Apostles and the crowd itself are struck by what they regard as a prodigy and not as merely a great example of trust in God.[1] This theory, with some others, has been ably rebutted by Reuss (372): 'It is alleged that Jesus did no more than give an example of charity, with the few provisions that He had, in such a way as to call forth similar acts on the part of a great number of those present. If this be so, we may rightly ask how tradition could ever have transformed such an act into the startling event described here. Again, the modern so-called orthodox explanation, which speaks of an augmentation of the nutritive force of the five loaves, or of a spiritual refection, or of some kind of magnetic action, is

[1] Cp. Bruce, *The Miraculous Element in the Gospel*, 217–218.

even less acceptable, as being not only contrary to the text (think of the twelve baskets of fragments !), but is in itself too absurd altogether, at the same time mocking the common sense of the Galilean crowd, and of the narrators themselves.'

But after having rejected all these fancies, the same critic suddenly turns round and says : ' As a matter of fact every way of overcoming the difficulty fails. On the one hand, by accepting the miracle as such, we are unable to reach any clear idea of it at all ; on the other, by trying to reduce the narrative to a level that will give some sort of handle for the intelligence, we run the risk of so changing the character of the tradition as to leave nothing of it whatsoever. In this dilemma the surest way is to refrain from all criticism of fact, preferring to seek out the elements of spiritual instruction ' (John vi).

Truly, there can be nothing better than to search for spiritual instruction here, and nothing more in conformity with the evangelists' thought ; but still it is necessary to base this instruction on the solid fact. This is the evident sense of the evangelists, and in particular of S. John, as also the ruling thought of their commentators, especially of S. Augustine, who in connection with this miracle develops his familiar comparison[1] of letters admired for their elegant form, while their meaning is thoroughly understood as well. But it would be folly to want to erase the handwriting, in order better to admire the meaning of the text. As for the writing itself, that is to say, the literal sense of the narrative, it is well to recall the interpretation of it that the holy doctor gives : ' The government of the whole universe is a greater miracle than the feeding of five thousand men with five loaves ; yet no one is impressed by it. They are astonished at the miracle, not because it is great, but because it is rare. Who, indeed, is He who feeds the whole universe, if not He who makes the harvests from a few seeds ? Then He has done what God can do. By the same power which makes whole harvests out of a few grains, He multiplies five small loaves. For the power was in the hands of Christ, and these five loaves were like seeds, not, it is true, consigned to the earth, but multiplied by Him who made the earth.'

This interpretation of S. Augustine is the most profound

[1] ' Hoc ergo miraculum, sicut audivimus quam magnum sit, quæramus etiam quam profundum sit ; non tantum eius superficie delectemur, sed etiam altitudinem perscrutemur. Habet enim aliquid intus, hoc quod miramur foris . . .' (P.L., XXXV, 1593).

explanation of the miracle. While a narrow rationalism seeks to do violence to the narrative in order to fit it into the framework of everyday experience, a more attentive observation detects in this experience itself the signs of a supreme power. And for him who has recognized it, the miracle itself is none other than an exceptional sign of this same power: an example of the way in which Almighty God compels those to confess Him who remain unmoved by His ordinary works. This point settled, everything else is secondary. It has been asked: How was the miracle actually performed? Was it in the baskets, or between the hands of the Apostles, that the multiplication took place? That is a question to which there is no need to reply. In distributing the loaves, the Apostles found them always in their hands, as the widow of Sarephta always found the bread and oil that was to feed Elias.

> 'And immediately He obliged His disciples to go up into the ship, that they might go before Him over the water to Bethsaida, whilst He dismissed the people. And when He had dismissed them, He went up to the mountain to pray.' (Mark vi, 45, 46.)[1]

The expression 'he obliged' employed by Matthew and Mark shows that our Lord had to conquer some repugnance on the part of His Apostles to separate from Him. Perhaps they hesitated about leaving Him alone in the midst of the crowd in this desert spot, but more probably they were profoundly moved by the miracle, and more or less shared the aspirations of the crowd. In fact, according to John vi, 15, this was the explanation of our Lord's retirement at this time: 'Jesus, therefore, when He knew that they would come to take Him by force and make Him king, fled again into the mountain, Himself alone.' This popular enthusiasm is easy enough to understand, for the people—and especially the Galileans—were ready to follow any prophet, true or false, who would draw them after him with promises of

[1] Le Camus, relying on Matthew xiv, 15 and 23, considers that two separate evenings were referred to (ii, 97) a supposition that has little to recommend it. On the contrary it appears that Jesus made His disciples set out immediately after the multiplication of the loaves, then dismissed the crowd, withdrew to the mountain, remained there in prayer, and about the fourth watch of the night rejoined His Apostles. All this took place on the same evening. The double reference that Matthew makes to the late hour does not imply two distinct days, but two moments of the advancing night. (Cp. Lagrange, in *Marc*, vi, 47.)

independence and the establishment of a messianic kingdom at an early date. So Josephus, although so careful to eliminate any messianic aspirations from his works, thus describes the various risings that took place in the twenty or twenty-five years that followed our Lord's death :

B.J., II, xiii, 4, 5 : 'Persons of the vagabond and knavish type, who seek only for revolution and change under the mask of divine inspiration, urged the multitude on to a mad delirium and led them into the desert, where, they said, God would be sure to show them signs of the coming deliverance. As it was possible to see in this the first seeds of revolt, Felix sent cavalry and infantry, heavily armed, against these misguided people, and cut a great number of them to pieces. But still more disastrous to the Jews was the career of the false Egyptian prophet, who appeared in the country under this name, but was really a charlatan who claimed the authority of a prophet, and managed to gather around him no less than thirty thousand dupes. He led them into the desert, as far as the Mount of Olives, by a circuitous route, whence, having conquered the garrison, he would be able to march on Jerusalem, and there to seize power, after this, he would reign as a tyrant over the people, with the support of the satellites who followed him in his invasion. However, Felix forestalled the attack by marching to meet him with the main body of Roman infantry, the whole people taking part in the defence. In the fight that followed, the Egyptian, with a few companions, took to flight. Many of the others were killed or taken prisoners. The rest of the mob dispersed, and each one went to try and hide himself as best he could.'

Such stories make it easy for us to understand how simple a matter it was to lead the Jewish people into revolt. We can imagine without difficulty what would have been the impression of the miracle on this crowd of five thousand men, enthusiastic enough to follow Jesus into the desert in spite of Himself, careless about food or drink. No doubt, too, they were excited by the imminence of the Passover, and more still, no doubt, by the Precursor's recent death. As much, and even more than the others, the Apostles were anxious to see the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, so that the contagion of the political enthusiasm of the crowd was a serious danger for them. Our Lord meant to take them out of it, but it needed all His authority. He made

them go, and remaining alone with the crowd, dismissed them, and then withdrew into the mountain by Himself to pray.

Already, on the previous night, He had thus withdrawn into prayer. Now He had recourse to it afresh. The following day was to be one of the most decisive and painful of His life. He was going to promise to men the supreme sign of His love, and this promise was going to detach from Him most of His hearers, and even some of His best disciples. And the events of the night, the storm, the walking on the waters, Peter's wavering faith, were all to be the presage of that stormy but fruitful day.

> 'And when it was late the ship was in the midst of the sea, and Himself alone on the land.' (Mark vi, 47.)

Jesus did not hurry to His Apostles' aid. They had started at nightfall : and by the fourth watch—about three in the morning—they had only done from twenty-five to thirty furlongs, i.e., about three miles (John vi, 19). The wind was contrary, and they were rapidly becoming exhausted in their vain efforts to advance ; they persevered, however, and, in their tenacious and meritorious effort of will, we recognize the firm habits of obedience in which they had been formed by our Lord, and which by a miracle He was about to bless. But first He wished to test this very strength of will, and so He tarried, as on many other occasions, for example at Lazarus' death. At last He came, approaching them in the way He did, so that they might see Him clearly and recognize Him ; however, He made as if He would pass them, not wishing to remove their uncertainty at once, just to show them how prompt they were to fear, and slow to believe. They cried out, and He quieted them with a word ; the well-known voice calming them as His mere appearance could not, since His walking on the water, acting on their fear amidst the influences of the night, led them to take Him for a ghost.

And at once Peter was impatient to rejoin our Lord :

'We notice,' says S. Chrysostom, 'his fervour and his faith : but we are also aware of his usual fault of asking for what is beyond his strength. And here he asks for something great in the order of miracles, from love only and not from the desire of display. He does not say 'bid me walk upon the waters,' but 'bid me come to Thee,' for none loved Jesus so much. It was the same after the Resur-

rection. He could not wait to come with the others, but leapt into the water that he might be first; and thus he showed not only his love but his faith. He believed not only that Jesus could come to him on the water, but also that He could give the same power to another; and he is impatient to be with Him without delay' (P.G., LVIII, 505–6).

Jesus said 'Come!' but the violence of the wind made him afraid; he began to sink, and cried out; and Jesus held out His hand and held him up: 'like a little bird that has ventured from the nest too soon and is ready to fall, whom the mother bird supports, and bears back to the nest upon her wings' (ib.). But, we may ask, why did our Lord let him do it at all? Because if He had told him it was beyond his power, 'Peter would not have believed it and might have made some headstrong attempt; but he was allowed to experience his own weakness instead, that he might be more modest in days to come' (ib.).

No sooner had Jesus entered the boat than the storm died down, and the disciples, no longer asking: 'What manner of man is this, that the winds and the sea obey Him,' threw themselves at His feet with the cry: 'Indeed Thou art the Son of God.' We have no difficulty in seeing what progress had been made in the training of the Apostles, or in understanding why this miracle was worked. The events of the next day would be a great test, not only for the crowd, but for the disciples themselves; Christ was going to put before them the most admirable but also the most astounding of mysteries, so He enlightened their mind by a succession of prodigies throughout this night, to prepare them for what was to come.

Our Lord's walking on the waters may remind us of the passage in Job (ix, 8) which represents God as 'walking upon the waves of the sea' as upon dry ground. And before long the author of the *Odes of Solomon* (xxxix) would write: 'Across the floods the Lord has made a bridge by His word; His paths are firm upon the water and are not removed; nay, they are like wood solidly fixed, while the waves surge upon every side; but the paths of our Lord Christ are firm and are neither effaced nor destroyed; He has prepared the way for those who come after Him, who accomplish the way of His faith and adore His name' (tr. Labourt).

The splendour of these marvels would, indeed, enlighten them later; but it only dazzled them now. Full of faith

they prostrate themselves before them, and yet Mark tells us: 'they were astonished within themselves; for they understood not concerning the loaves: for their heart was blinded.' Beyond all doubt, like the crowd, and yet more clearly, they had recognized the miraculous character of the multiplication of the loaves, and the stilling of the tempest had affected them still more; but their souls were not yet strong enough calmly to sustain wonders like this; they were half-blinded and troubled in spirit, as the evangelist remarks: 'their hearts were still hard.' Later on, when all this resistance was gone, Christ would be able to diffuse His peace gently into their hearts.

Meanwhile the Apostles gladly received Jesus into the ship, and they found themselves at the shore without further delay.[1]

After this day of wonders, the rest of the night was passed at Capharnaum. These miracles, like all the miracles of Christ, were no vain demonstrations of power. He fed the crowd in the wilderness, rescued His Apostles from the tempest, and in their regard fulfilled to the letter the Psalmist's words: 'And He brought them out of their distresses. And He turned the storm into a breeze: and its waves were still. And they rejoiced because they were still: and He brought them to the haven which they wished for' (Ps. cvi, 28–30). But these miracles of beneficence are also, and more visibly than the others, miracles of power. The elements are in Christ's hands; so we see the Apostles prostrating themselves before Him and crying: 'Indeed Thou art the Son of God.' What they now recognize under the vivid impression of the miracle, they will scarcely remember when their carnal ideas are offended by the sublimity of our Lord's teaching. With the void opening around them, they themselves will be shaken; but at least Peter, the most fervent of all, under the influence of grace will repeat the confession of this night. 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.'

And Christians in every age will find in the miracles of this day and night an introduction to their Eucharistic

[1] John vi, 21: Cp. S. Chrysostom on this passage: 'John means that Christ entered the boat at the moment when the Apostles were on the point of reaching land.'

faith. The multiplication of loaves was a foreshadowing of the still more marvellous multiplication of the Bread come down from heaven to give life to the world ; while, too, the miracle of Christ walking on the waters, shows that this Divine body, sprung from the virginal womb of Mary, can, if God so wills, triumph over nature's laws. On this subject the commentaries of the sixteenth century make interesting reading. Calvin, wholly concerned to combat the dogma of the Eucharist, is unwilling to admit the presence of these miraculous properties in our Lord's Body upon earth. In order, therefore, to explain the miracle, he has recourse to a solidification of the water of the lake, without stopping to reflect that, on this theory, the water ought to have carried Peter as well as Jesus Himself. These suggestions of a timid faith are held by no one at the present time ; whoever accepts a miracle at all accepts it as a whole ; and in the light of the present miracle, taken in that way, the mystery of the Eucharist becomes much clearer to our minds.

VIII. The Bread of Life.

To-day, when we approach the study of the sixth chapter of S. John and consider the various interpretations proposed by scholars, we are struck by the profound change that has taken place since the sixteenth century. The Protestant commentators of that period saw, in the whole chapter, no reference to anything other than a spiritual refection, by faith ; while Catholics, without condemning this interpretation, which was fairly widespread among them, and had been left open by the Council of Trent,[1] tended to insist more and more on the eucharistic interpretation of our Lord's words. To-day the controversy has changed, and is no longer between believing Christians on the questions of faith or the sacraments, but between Christians and those who belong to the Rationalist school. The traditional Protestant interpretation is no longer upheld by anyone. Consequently, Catholics have no longer to establish the fact that it is the Holy Eucharist that is in question here ;[2] but rather that we

[1] Cp. Cavallera, *L'Interprétation du chapitre VI de S. Jean ; une controverse exégétique au Concile de Trente : Revue d'Hist. ecclés.* (1909), pp. 687–709.

[2] Cp. Goguel, *L'Eucharistie des Origines à Justin Martyr* (Paris, 1910), p. 204, n. 1 : ' Generally speaking, both Catholic commentators and those of the critical school pronounce in favour of the Eucharistic interpretation of the passage. This is rejected by Protestants of the conservative school.'

are here dealing with historical realities and not simply with an allegorical exposition of Eucharistic belief. Loisy sees no more than this in the whole sixth chapter, while Réville thinks that the multiplication of the loaves was no more than the figurative account of a Eucharistic meal. All this is one among many proofs of the solidity of the traditional interpretation of the Church. The moment that dogmatic preoccupations lose their hold upon our opponents, their explanation becomes identical with, or even goes beyond our own. It is well to note this, but it is no motive for abandoning our position in order to make battle on another front. The excesses of our new adversaries must not, any more than the attacks of the old, divert us from the simple path of truth.

The Synoptics, whom we have followed above, relate that Jesus and His disciples after crossing the lake came to Genesareth, thus omitting our Lord's whole discourse, which took place in Capharnaum as related by John. The evangelist's first words insist on a fact that the crowd could have ascertained for themselves : there was only one boat, and our Lord had not entered it, yet He was no longer there ; so we have here, as Maldonatus remarks, new witnesses of the miracle of the night. Not finding Him there, they went after Him. Some boats had reached Capharnaum, perhaps driven out of their course by the storm of the previous night, and these were used. It is clear that these vessels could not carry the five thousand hearers of the night before. No doubt the more zealous boarded them, while perhaps the others joined them on foot, as on the day before.

'Rabbi,' they asked, 'when camest Thou hither?' Like the Apostles, and more than they, their hearts are impervious to the spiritual things, and the miracle they had witnessed the day before in no way helped them to understand how Christ might have crossed the lake ; they thought that perhaps He had preceded them in another boat. Jesus did not reply, but, as always in S. John, ignoring questions inspired by mere curiosity, He passed on to spiritual teaching at once : 'Amen, amen, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled.' A little before, John himself tells us (vi, 2) : 'a great multitude followed Him, because they saw the miracles which He did on them that were diseased.' It *was*, then, the miracles that attracted them, but what they sought in them was not a 'sign,' but some material

benefit, healing, or food : 'instead of seing the sign in the bread, they saw only the bread in the sign.'[1] Our Lord tried to turn all these desires towards eternal life, by inspiring in them, as S. Augustine remarks, the same train of thought, as in the case of the Samaritan woman : 'she rejoiced in the promises of Christ, she desired the water he offered, so that she might not know thirst or the weariness of drawing from the well : and by these desires she was led to a spiritual draught. And we have the same process here.'

However, the Jews were less docile than the Samaritan woman ; and their questions were less for their own information than to embarrass our Lord. 'What shall we do that we may work the works of God ?' (vi, 28). But our Lord went on with His exposition, without spending any time on questions like these : 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He hath sent.' Orthodox Protestants have often taken this response as proving that, for Jesus, the 'work of God' was faith, to the exclusion of all others : a feeble conclusion, effectively refuted by Maldonatus and other Catholic controversialists, and held by nobody to-day. Our Lord would not have spoken these words at all, if His opponents had not started talking about the work of God ; then He took up their own expression to show them that what they needed to do then was to believe in Him.

Thus pressed, the Jews, as usual, demanded a sign : *Judaei signa petunt.* It may seem surprising that this demand should be renewed, after the miracle of the previous day and their anxiety to make Christ a king. But the very fact that they yielded so enthusiastically to their national aspirations made them less prepared for the religious duties imposed on them by Christ and, in a sort of self-defence, they ask for fresh signs. Moses had fed them for forty years ; would Jesus do the same ? Once again we are conscious of the utter worldliness of their desires : they had been nourished by bread, and they wanted it to be always so. This comparison with Moses reminds us of that drawn by the Samaritan woman, of Christ with Jacob : 'Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank thereof himself and his children and his cattle ?' (iv, 12). There, too, the greatness of a man is measured by his beneficence in temporal affairs.

On that occasion, our Lord replied by stressing the

[1] Lange, quoted by Godet.

difference between the water given by Jacob and that which He would Himself give.

> 'Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst for ever. But the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting.' (John iv, 13, 14.)

And it is the same here. The True Bread, the Bread of Heaven, was not given by Moses at all; it is the Father who gives it, and then developing His line of thought: '. . . the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world.' This bread of heaven and of angels is the Word of God: it comes down from heaven, and can give life not only to a few, but to the whole world: it is given to us in the Eucharist, to quicken us in every way, both body and soul. The body, like a stone, draws us downwards by its weight; but this heavenly bread draws us up to heaven.[1] Then the Jews replied: 'Lord, give us always this bread.' And here again we find the same train of thought as in the case of the Samaritan woman. She, too, asked: 'Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw.' Like her, the Jews had no thought for anything but bodily refreshment, but for this they are greedy enough.[2]

And just as the conversation with the Samaritan woman ended with our Lord's declaration: 'I am He (the Christ) who am speaking with thee,' so now He says to the Jews: 'I am the Bread of Life.' And He immediately adds: 'He that cometh to Me shall not hunger: and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst.' So He repeats all His promises, and shows their fulfilment in Himself: but those who will enjoy them are those who come to Him, and those who come are those who believe in Him. But the Jews have seen and not believed (36); they have seen His miracles to such purpose that they wished to take Him and make Him a king. But they always remain at the purely human level; never rising higher by faith, never seeing in the Son of Man the

[1] S. Cyril *in hoc loco*, 501–508.

[2] 'Quomodo mulier illa Samaritana, cui dictum est, Qui biberit de hac aqua, non sitiet umquam; continuo illa secundum corpus accipiens, sed tamen carere indigentia volens, Da mihi, inquit, Domine, de hac aqua; sic et isti, Domine, da nobis panem hunc, qui nos reficiat nec deficiat' (Aug., 1603). Cp. Cyr., 513 *c*.

Bread of heaven, which gives life to the world.[1] 'All that the Father giveth to Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will not cast out.' Here our Lord gives a hint of the reason for the strange blindness of the Jews. They have offended the Father (cp. Cyril, 524) and the Father had not given them to His Son; while those who seemed farthest off will be drawn by the Father to the Son; the heathen will come, the Eucharist will vivify them, and 'him that cometh to Me I will not cast out.'[2]

The two verses 38 and 39 are closely connected, and the two taken together give us the reason for verse 37: '. . . him that cometh to Me I will not cast out. Because I came down from heaven, not to do My own Will, but the Will of Him that sent me. Now this is the Will of the Father who sent Me: that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose nothing.' But at the same time we notice the express affirmation of verse 38: 'I came down from heaven. . . .' Already Jesus had told Nicodemus: 'no man hath ascended

[1] Bossuet (29e journée) sums up this development as follows: 'So He tells them that He is come down from heaven; and that he who comes to Him will never hunger and he who believes in Him will never thirst. Consequently, He is the true bread, the true food of souls that come to Him by faith. But man may not hope to attain this power of himself; it being an end too high to be reached by a nature sinful and given up to the things of bodily sense. He is made man, that He may draw near to them, the flesh He has taken is the only means that He has given them to be united to Him; and to that end He has filled it with divinity itself. . . . Therefore,' he continues, 'we have in Him the true life, the eternal life, the life of soul and body; and not precisely in Him as Son of God, but as Son of Man, for it was with that he began: "Labour for . . . the meat . . . which endureth . . . unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you: "if only at the same time you believe in the Bread come down from heaven, that is, the Son of God, and that you believe that His Flesh by which He will quicken you is full of spirit and life."'

[2] S. Augustine (1603–1605) thus comments on this verse: 'What is this interior from which souls must not be driven? It is a sublime intimacy and a most sweet secret. Oh! secret of which one never tires, unspoilt by bitterness or evil thoughts; by the distraction of temptation or of gnawing grief. Lies it not there, the secret into which the good servant is initiated by His Lord. Enter into the joy of thy Master. . . . If thou dost not reject him who comes to thee, if thou castest him not out, it is because thou art descended from heaven, not to do thy will, but the will of Him who hast sent thee: and it is a great secret. Let us knock at the door together, I implore you. . . . In Thee, and not in us, is the source of Life; so we must enter if we are to live; we cannot rest in our self-sufficiency without perishing; we cannot feed on our own vitality without spending ourselves . . . if then in Thee is the source of life, if it is in Thy light that we are to see light, let us enter in order to drink and see . . . let us come to Him, enter into Him, be incorporated in Him . . . and He will not cast us out, because we are His members, because He has willed to be our Head, teaching us humility.'

into heaven, but He that descended from heaven, the Son of Man : ' but it is in this discourse more than anywhere else that Jesus explicitly affirms His heavenly origin : He has already let it be inferred when speaking of the true bread descended from heaven, which gives life to the world (32, 33) : but now He states it in express terms. And, with this heavenly origin, the whole purpose of the Incarnation is proclaimed, too. ' Not to do My own Will but the Will of Him that sent Me.' S. Cyril (529–532) understands these words especially of the Passion, and it is certain that it is there, above all, that Christ's choice of His Father's Will appears ; but His whole life was a carrying-out of this intention, and it is especially S. John's concern to make us realize this perpetual self-annihilation and effacement, before the Father, of the Son of God.

It is the Father's Will that all those whom He has given to the Son should receive life from Him, and by Him be kept safe for ever; and so, in His priestly prayer on His last day, Jesus can say to His Father : ' . . . Thou hast given Him [Thy Son] power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him ' (xvii, 2) ; and a little later : ' Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept : and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled ' (12). So the Son keeps them, and no man shall pluck them out of His hand (x, 26). Nor does this faithful custody end at death, but is for all eternity ; and those whom the Son has thus received, He will raise up again at the Last Day. This promise of the resurrection will often occur again during this discourse, and will appear everywhere as the privilege of those who shall have been filled with the life of the Son of God.

So it is the Father's Will that all who see the Son of God and believe in Him should have eternal life (40) ; a point brought out by S. Cyril (544, 545) :

' The Father, then, gives to the Son who can quicken with life those who have need of life ; and He gives them by communicating to each the knowledge of the Son, by making them understand Him in purity and truth. . . . Thus, by knowledge and contemplation, the Father leads to the Son those upon whom He wishes to bestow His heavenly grace. The Son who receives them quickens them with His life, communicating to these beings, by

nature corruptible, the life that is His by right. He implants within them, like sparks of fire, the Spirit's vivifying force, and wholly transforms them in preparation for everlasting life.'

> 'The Jews, therefore, murmured at Him, because He had said: I am the living bread which came down from heaven. And they said: Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How, then, saith He: I came down from heaven? Jesus, therefore, answered and said to them: Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw Him. And I will raise Him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets: And they shall all be taught of God. Everyone that hath heard of the Father and hath learned cometh to Me. Not that any man hath seen the Father: but he who is of God, he hath seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say unto you: He that believeth in Me hath everlasting life. I am the Bread of Life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert; and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven: that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world.' (John vi, 41–52.)

In the preceding verses we have seen one statement after another falling categorically from our Redeemer's lips. This bread of life, this bread come down from heaven, towards which He has little by little guided His hearers' attention, is none other than Himself. We have already compared the course of this conversation with that which took place at Jacob's well; but now the difference appears. At our Lord's definite statement: 'I am He who am speaking with thee,' the Samaritan woman believed at once. But this time our Lord's hearers were less docile; His statement did not win their adhesion, but provoked murmurs instead. What shocked them was not the mystery of the Eucharist, which had not yet been clearly set forth, but the statement of the pre-existence of Jesus in heaven. They thought they knew Him so well, Him, and His father and Mother! This workman of Nazareth, their own fellow-townsman and neighbour, *He* to have come from heaven! We have here

an echo of the scene at Nazareth—not recorded by John ; and, indeed, it is very probable that these murmurs made themselves heard more than once.[1]

It is in this chapter that our Lord's audience are first called 'Jews,' an expression that, with S. John, always refers to the adversaries of Christ. It has been suggested that these interrupters were Pharisees from Jerusalem who had mingled with the crowd, but there is really nothing to indicate this. It seems more likely that the audience was the same all along, and that they allowed themselves gradually to be drawn over to the side of the enemies of Christ.

Our Lord replied by repeating His former statements, and first of all the necessity of coming to Him, after having been drawn to do so by the Father Himself. Similarly He would later on tell His opponents at Jerusalem : 'He that is of God heareth the words of God. Therefore, you hear them not, because you are not of God' (viii, 47).[2] Then, having

[1] Certain exegetes have sought to draw from this passage an argument against the Virgin birth ; but Godet answers them as follows (515) : 'Some critics have asked how the people could have been ignorant of the miraculous birth of Jesus, if it was really a fact, and why Jesus did not refer to this point in His reply. But Christ's birth took place in Judea, and thirty years before the date we have now reached. During the long obscurity in which the childhood and infancy of Jesus had been wrapped, all had been buried in silence, and that very probably in the very spots where the events in question had taken place ; how much more then in Galilee, where the mass of the people had never known them ! Certainly, neither our Lord Himself nor His relations would be likely to refer to them in public, for that would have been to expose the most sacred family mystery to a vulgar and, what is more, useless discussion. For our Lord's miraculous origin is not a means of producing faith : it can only be accepted by those who already have a believing heart. As Weiss remarks : 'It was not really difficulties of this kind that were the cause of their incredulity, and so why should Jesus pause to reply to them.'

[2] In commenting on this passage the Fathers have been at pains to show that this action of the Father in no way forces our free-will. So S. Cyril (553) : 'Since He said above : "No man can come to Me except the Father who hath sent Me draw Him :" He takes care to show that this attraction is not constraint or violence, and adds : "Every one that hath heard of the Father and hath learned, cometh to Me." For when we hear of hearing, learning and being taught, it is manifest that it is a question of persuasion that produces faith, and not of any kind of force ; and this faith is more a help than a constraint. It is the understanding of Christ who is given by the Father to those who become worthy by love ; for it is necessary to safeguard the dogmatic truth of the freedom of the human will, so that the just may receive the reward for their good actions and the wicked be justly chastised for their faults, according to the good pleasure of the Lawgiver.'

S. Augustine especially has explained this truth in an inimitable way : (P.L., XXXV, 1608, 1609) : 'Do not think that you are drawn to Christ in spite of yourself ; for love also attracts, and we need not be disturbed because men who consider words only and are far removed from realities,

added the words: 'And I will raise him up at the last day,' thus repeating the promise of immortality in order to draw souls to Himself, He recalls the promises made to the prophets of old. In the days of the Messias all men would be taught directly by Jehovah Himself. This was foretold by Isaias in the passage now quoted by our Lord (liv, 13); 'All thy children shall be taught of the Lord: and great shall be the peace of thy children.' And similarly by Jeremias:

> 'I will give My law in their bowels and I will write it in their heart: and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying: Know the Lord. For all shall know Me from the least of them to the greatest, saith the Lord.' (Jeremias xxxi, 33, 34.)

And, once again by Joel ii, 28. Perhaps our Lord expressly employed the formula: 'It is written in the prophets' to recall to His hearers' minds this whole collection of texts.

especially heavenly ones, bring this text against us and say: "How can I believe of my own free-will, if I am drawn?" For my part, I reply: "You are drawn by the will, or, to put it more adequately, you are attracted by pleasure (*voluptate*)." What is it, then, to be attracted by pleasure? "Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart" (Ps. xxxvi, 4). The heart also has its pleasures, and to it this heavenly bread is sweet. And if the poet could say: "*Trahit sua quemque voluptas*," not need, but pleasure, not necessity, but charm, how much more justly can we say that man is drawn by Christ, by the attraction of truth, of happiness, of justice, and everything of that kind; that is, by Christ Himself? Or may we say that the bodily senses have their pleasures, but the soul has none? If the soul has no pleasures of its own, how is it that the Psalm says (xxxv, 8–10): ". . . the children of men shall put their trust under the covert of Thy wings. They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure. For with Thee is the fountain of life: and in Thy light we shall see light." Give me a man who loves, and he will know what I mean; give me a man moved by some desire, a man who is hungry, a man who is a pilgrim thirsty in the wilderness, and who sighs after the living springs of the eternal fatherland; give me such a man, and to him my meaning will be plain enough. But a man cold of heart will miss it. Such were those who murmured among themselves. . . . The Revelation of the Son is the attraction. You show a green branch to a sheep, and thereby attract it; nuts are shown to a child, and he is attracted by them; he is attracted, and runs towards them; he is drawn by love, without any bodily compulsion; he is drawn by the cords of the heart. If, then, these earthly pleasures and delights attract those who gaze on them with love, since the saying *trahit sua quemque voluptas* is true: can we say that Christ revealed by the Father has no power to draw souls to Himself? For what does the soul desire more strongly than truth?'

But if all are taught by the Father, no one hath seen Him but he 'who is of God.' So also Christ had assured Nicodemus that He only has descended from heaven who has ascended there and who can speak from experience (iii, 13), and S. John repeats the same truth at the end of the Prologue: 'No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him' (i, 18). Our Lord was particular about affirming these unique relations with His Father, a fact attested by the Synoptics as well (Matt. xi, 27). He alone knows the Father and can reveal Him.

Then, with still greater force, He declares afresh that He is the Bread of Life, and contrasts this bread with the manna which, though eaten by the Jews, had no power to save them from death.

'Why,' says S. Augustine, 'did they die, having eaten? Because they did not believe what they saw, or understand what they did not see. So they are your fathers, for you are like them. For, my brethren, so far as visible and corporeal death is concerned, do not we also die, we who have eaten of the bread that came down from heaven? . . . But as for the death with which we are threatened by Christ, and of which the fathers died, I say: Moses ate of the manna, Aaron ate of the manna, Phinees ate of the manna, many friends of the Lord ate of the manna, and did not die. And why? Because they understood this visible food in a spiritual sense; they experienced spiritual hunger; they tasted it spiritually, to be spiritually filled. But we, too, to-day receive a visible food; but the sacrament is one thing and the virtue of the sacrament another. . . . Be careful, then, my brethren; partake spiritually of this heavenly food, carry it to the altar of innocence. If you commit daily sins, see that they are not mortal. Before you approach the altar, recall the words so often on your lips: Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven: approach with confidence; this is bread, not poison . . .' (1611).

Here we can see already the main lines of S. Augustine's interpretation. In this particular section of his works he is not elaborating a theology of the Eucharist, but, above all, an exhortation to unity. In this African Church, ravaged

by schism, he presents the Eucharist, the sacrament of unity, above all else.[1]

This is high and noble doctrine, but we may not say that it directly expresses the teaching given by Christ in this discourse. It is more like an application of it, by the holy bishop, to the needs of his hearers. S. Cyril's interpretation more faithfully represents our Lord's thought. Above all, the life-giving power of the Body of Christ, which is, after all, the central idea of this discourse of our Lord; and is set in greater relief in the verses before us at the moment: 'my flesh . . . for the life of the world' (52); given by Christ in offering Himself for us to the Father as a victim. It is in this sense that He says (John xvii, 19): 'And for them do I sanctify Myself,' that is, I offer Myself as a spotless victim in the odour of sweetness. So Christ gives His Body for the life of all: S. Cyril describes further how He gives us that life: 'Since the Word of God, from whom all things derive this life, has made His dwelling in the flesh, He has transformed it so as to give it that quality proper to Himself, that is, life, and being united to it in an

[1] Thus a little further on (1612), in commenting on verse 52, he writes: 'This is my flesh, for the life of the world. The faithful recognize the Body of Christ [i.e., in the Eucharist], if they do not neglect to be the body of Christ [i.e., belong to the mystical body, the Church]. May they become the body of Christ [i.e., belong to the mystical body], if they wish to live by the Spirit of Christ. Only the body of Christ can live by the Spirit of Christ. . . . The body of Christ cannot live save by the Spirit of Christ. So the Apostle Paul, in explaining the mystery of this bread, says: "For we being many are one bread, one body." O, sacrament of piety! O, sign of unity! O, bond of Charity! He who would live, knows where he can live, and on what he can live. Let him approach, let him believe; let him be incorporated, that he may be quickened with life.' And, still further on, he explains that the only necessary, but also the only infallible, means of life is the mystical Body of Christ, the reality, of which we have the sacrament here on earth: 'The sacrament of this reality, that is, the unity of the Body and Blood of Christ, is prepared in certain places and on certain days at the Lord's table, and it is at this table that men receive, some unto life, and some unto death; but the reality itself, of which this is the sacrament, gives to whomsoever receives it, always life, and never death' (1614). This is what is meant by the grains of corn, the seeds of the grape buried in the unity of a single substance (ibid., 17). And commenting on verse 57: 'He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me: and I in him,' he writes: 'Hoc est ergo manducare illam escam, et illum bibere potum, in Christo manere, et illum manentem in se habere . . .' (1614); and further on (1616): 'signum quia manducavit et bibet hoc est, si manet et manetur, si habitat et inhabitatur, si hæret ut non deseratur. Hoc ergo nos docuit et admonuit mysticis verbis, ut simus in eius corpore sub ipso capite in membris eius edentes carnem eius, non relinquentes unitatem eius.' Cp. 1618, 6; 1621, 11.

ineffable manner, he has rendered it full of life as by nature it is. For that reason, the Body of Christ vivifies those who partake of it, for when it enters into a mortal it drives out death, and banishes corruption by giving birth to a disposition that causes corruption to disappear. But, perhaps, someone, thinking of the resurrection of the dead, may say: Is it meant that those who have not received the faith of Christ, or partaken of His Flesh, will not come to life on the resurrection day? What, are all creatures who have fallen in death not to return to life? Most surely, we reply, all flesh will rise again; for the prophetic words foretell that the dead will rise. We know that the mystery of Christ's resurrection penetrates all humanity, and we believe that in Him primarily our corruptible nature has been destroyed. For all will rise after the likeness of Him who has risen again for us, and who, inasmuch as He is man, contains us all in Him. And just as in the person of the first Adam we were all swallowed up in death, so, in Him who is made the first-born for us, all the dead will live again; those who have done good in the resurrection to life; and those who have done evil in the resurrection to judgement' (565–568).

'The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this man give us His flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say unto you: except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed: and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me: and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live for ever. These things He said, teaching in the synagogue, in Capharnaum.' (John vi, 53–60.)

Following his usual method, the more our Lord's hearers resist His teaching, the more He insists: 'Notice,' writes Bossuet (32*e journée*), 'how our Lord, so to speak, sinks deeper and deeper into His subject. He begins the discourse

about heavenly food in connection with the material bread that He has just given them ; and He ends by telling them that He will give them His Flesh to eat and His Blood to drink ; teaching this as insistently as He had done the fact of His incarnation, and therefore clearly showing us by this, that we must also eat His Flesh and drink His Blood as really as He has taken both into union with Himself. . . . Our faith must extend to that, for it began with that. We must believe in Jesus Christ who gives us His Flesh to eat, just as we must believe in Jesus Christ come down from heaven and clothed with this flesh ; it is not, for all that, faith which brings it about that Christ has come down from heaven and appeared in the flesh : it is not faith which causes this flesh to be given us to eat. Whether we believe or not, this is so ; whether we believe or not, Jesus Christ has come down from heaven in human flesh ; whether we believe or not, Jesus Christ gives to be eaten the same Flesh that He took.'

There are still some Protestants even to-day who make an attempt to understand the whole of this discourse in an allegorical sense.[1] However, the adherents of this interpretation are becoming more and more rare ; and if there were any need to refute them, it would be enough to refer them to their co-religionists who have freed themselves from this tradition.[2]

It is from verse 51 onwards that, according to S. Chrysostom, the teaching of the discourse becomes definitely Eucharistic.[3] Up to that point, referring to the Eucharist in veiled words, in accordance with the principle of the *arcana*, he now says : ' Let the initiated follow what I am going to say,' and then continues as follows (260) :

' That we may be united with Him, not only by love, but

[1] So Godet (528) : ' By the shed blood, expiation is represented, and to drink this blood is to appropriate this expiation by faith, and to find reconciliation with God, which is the basis of salvation. The broken flesh represents the holy life of Christ ; to eat it is to make one's own this life of submission and love ; it is the reception by the help of the Spirit which thus makes us to live. In these two intimate facts salvation is summed up.'

[2] For example, Zahn, who gives five reasons against this whole symbolism of feeding by faith (pp. 351–352).

[3] Until then, he sees in the bread a reference to the divinity of Christ. Thus on verse 35 (' I am the Bread of Life ') he writes (253) : ' He speaks first of His divinity when He says : " I am the Bread of Life." For this is not said of His Body. Of this He speaks at the end of the discourse, when He says : " the bread that I will give is My flesh : " but up to that point, He speaks of His divinity.'

also in reality, we must become blended with that Flesh ; and this takes place by the food that He gives us, wishing to show us the desire that He has for us. That is why He has come among us, and mingled His Flesh with ours, that we may become one thing ; one body joined to the Head. . . . For in this we recognize a burning desire. . . . This is what Christ has done for us, admitting us into a most intimate friendship, and showing us the great desire that He has for us. He has not wished only to show Himself to those who desire Him, but to let Himself be touched and eaten . . . to blend Himself with us and satisfy all our desires. . . . Often enough mothers leave to others the duty of feeding those to whom they have given birth, but I (He says) do not act thus ; on the contrary, I feed them with My own flesh ; I offer Myself to you ; I wish to ennoble you, I wish to give you the fairest hopes of future good. For He who so gives Himself to us now, will give Himself still more in the world to come. I have wished to become your brother ; for you, I have taken flesh and blood ; and I now give you this flesh and blood by which I have become your brother.'[1]

Here again it is S. Cyril who furnishes the most complete and profound interpretation of this passage. He begins by calling attention to the folly and impiety of the Jews who, after so many miracles, still ask ' How ? ' (572–576). Christ in His mercy, he observes, does not give them the explanation that they demand : faith must precede research (576*cd*). So He tries to evoke faith by promises of life ; later, at the institution of the Eucharist, He will give this bread to those who believe : here He arouses faith (577*a*). These promises are always the same. It is life that His Flesh will give, and S. Cyril goes on to explain the life-giving nature of this flesh.

' The Son is Life by nature, inasmuch as He is born of the Father essentially living ; and equally His sacred Body is living, as being united in an ineffable manner with the Word which quickens all . . . and since the Saviour's flesh has become life-giving, in virtue of being united to that which is life by nature, that is, the Word of God, when we taste it we have the life in ourselves, as being united to Him, in the same way that the Flesh we receive is united to the Word

[1] This development of Eucharistic doctrine in S. Chrysostom lies isolated among his homilies ; it shows by contrast how the instruction given to the initiated differed from that given to others.

which dwells within it. . . . So He is not content with a word to bring the dead to life, but to show the life-giving property of His Body, as we have already said, He touches the dead, and by His Body communicates life to bodies already infected with corruption. And if, by the mere contact of the sacred Flesh, that which is corrupt is quickened, how much more shall we be completely blessed and endowed with life, when we actually eat it? For it will entirely transform those who receive it into its own proper quality, that is, into life' (577). And a little later on, he explains thus how he who communicates dwells in Christ: 'If we join together two pieces of wax, they appear wholly fused, one with the other. In the same way, as I see it, he who receives the flesh of Christ our Saviour and drinks His Precious Blood, makes, as He says Himself, one with Him; he is in a certain manner dissolved and mingled with Him in Communion, in such a way that he is in Christ and Christ in him. This is what our Lord teaches us in S. Matthew's gospel when He says: "The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened" . . . "A little leaven corrupteth the whole lump," says S. Paul; so the smallest portion of the holy Bread takes possession of our body, and fills it with its own energy, so that Christ is in us, and we in Him' (584). Cp. Mahé, *Rev. d'Hist. Eccl.*, 1907, 684.

All this, S. John tells us, was taught by Christ in the synagogue at Capharnaum. Now in the ruins of this synagogue there may be seen, on a lintel, sculptures representing the manna in a jar covered with vine-leaves and branches of grapes. Whether these ruins belonged to the synagogue where Jesus taught is uncertain (*supra*, p. 87) but, in any case, we find among them symbols familiar to the Jews. The manna, represented there, was Moses' great gift to his people; so much so, that the Jews thought it had been granted on account of his merits, and had been withheld by God after his death, but that the Messias would give it anew. These were the sort of hopes that haunted the spirit of our Lord's hearers, and it was to them that our Lord replied when He repeated once more: 'Your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live for ever.'

Here, as so often in S. John, and notably in the discourse after the Last Supper, the whole utterance is recorded

without interruption. But it seems certain that there were a number of interpolations and discussions as it went on.[1] In any case, the last verses that remain for us to consider are clearly quite distinct from the discourse itself; they record the impression that it produced.

'Many therefore of His disciples, hearing it, said: This saying is hard: and who can hear it? But Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples murmured at this, said to them: Doth this scandalize you? If then you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe and who he was that would betray Him. And He said: Therefore did I say to you that no man can come to Me, unless it be given him by My Father. After this, many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. Then Jesus said to the twelve: Will you also go away? And Simon Peter answered Him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus answered them: Have not I chosen you twelve? And one of you is a devil. Now He meant Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for this same was about to betray Him, whereas he was one of the twelve.' (John vi, 61–72.)

So it was with conflict and desertion that the long discussion closed. 'This sacrament of unity and bond of charity' was only revealed, it seemed, to scandalize the crowd, discourage the disciples, and even prepare the treachery of Judas. It is one of the most pathetic pages of the Gospel story. The discourse itself leads us to expect this blindness of the Jews, so much so that S. Chrysostom (259, 260) asks why our Lord had put the mystery before them at all. And answering his own question, he says that

[1] Of these Westcott distinguishes three groups: vv. 26–40; 41–51; 52–58. The first was concerned with the quest of life; the second, with the relations between the Son of God and mankind; the third, with the union of each man with the Incarnate Son. He adds that the audience changes, like the scene; the Jews are introduced in vv. 41–52, and not before; the last words are spoken in the synagogue (50), but it is scarcely conceivable that the discussion began there.

Christ could not have kept silence any longer. No doubt the people were still unable to understand, but they could have believed as the Apostles did, awaiting the future and relying on His promises; they had no right to expect better guarantees than the miracles they had seen. Jesus did not say: 'There are some among you that do not understand,' but: 'There are some that believe not;' 'for,' observes S. Augustine, 'it was through lack of faith that they did not understand (1618, 7): faith must come first, and then God gives the understanding of the mystery. The same idea runs through Peter's reply: "We have believed and have known." We have believed, in order to be able to know; for if we had wished to know before believing, we should neither have been able to know nor believe' (1619, 9). Similarly, but more emphatically, S. Cyril writes: 'After faith knowledge, and not before faith, as it is written: "If you do not believe, you will not understand"' (628, 9).[1]

The thought of our Lord's departure would be another terrible stumbling-block for the disciples, and more so than His discourse. However, He puts it before them, as usual in S. John, together with the idea of glorification. This would be realized in His ascension on high from whence He came, while at the same time this mention of heaven recalled what He had so often affirmed throughout His discourse, that He was come from above; and so He sets their minds on a line of interpretation apparently less conflicting with His promises; and, by way of confirming them in this, added: 'It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing.' S. Chrysostom's interpretation of this is: 'that which profiteth nothing is not Christ's flesh, without which we could not live; it is carnal understanding;' while S. Cyril writes (601): 'Of its own nature the flesh is powerless to give life; but in so far as it has dwelling within it the vivifying Word, it can do so;' for in our Saviour

[1] S. Cyril also recalls the Psalmist's words: 'How sweet are Thy words to my palate! More than honey to my mouth!' (cxviii, 103). But to the Jews these sayings are hard. So, of old, had they welcomed Moses' words (597): when they were on the very threshold of the Land of Promise, they were seized with fear: 'The land which we have viewed, devoureth its inhabitants. . . . There we saw monsters of the giant kind . . . in comparison of whom we seemed like locusts' (Num. xiii, 32, 33); and on the strength of these false reports, the Jews murmured, saying: 'Let us appoint a captain and let us return to Egypt' (xiv, 4). Here in the same way they mistrust God's promises and murmur. Like them, they will be rejected.

the plenitude of the divinity has dwelt corporeally, and the Lord is the Spirit.[1] Our Lord's explanation retracts nothing of what He has previously affirmed, and, as a matter of fact, many were discouraged and left Him.[2]

And then Christ turns to His Apostles: 'Will you also go away?' S. Cyril (612) observes that, in speaking in this way, Christ was not giving them a free choice to leave Him or to remain faithful, just as they liked; but He was warning them. If they were not better than the Jews, they would be rejected like them, and others would take their place. God is good, but He is severe, too (Rom. xi, 22). He keeps those who are faithful in union with Himself; but others He cuts off without pity. He has need of no one, not even of His Apostles: it is they that have need of Him: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.'

And here Judas' treachery makes its appearance for the first time; being clearly foretold by our Lord, but without any mention of who the traitor was to be: 'Have I not chosen you twelve? And one of you is a devil:' a prediction that finds an echo in S. John's words, so expressive although so restrained: 'Now He meant Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon; for this same was about to betray Him, whereas he was one of the twelve.'

For the rest, the whole incident that we have just been describing foreshadowed the final crisis that was to come a year later. First, we have the enthusiasm of the crowd, who wished to seize Jesus and make Him a king—surely a presage of the first Palm Sunday. This time, however, Jesus did not lend Himself to the triumph prepared for Him which, doubtless, would not have been a simple demonstration like its parallel event. Instead, He withdrew into the mountain, much to the disappointment and surprise of the people, who found themselves asking who was He, if

[1] Cp. Bossuet (*43me journée*).

[2] S. Augustine remarks (Treatise xxvii, 8, 1619): 'They went away, not just one by one, but in large numbers, and perhaps it was for our consolation that this was allowed to occur. For sometimes it happens that a man speaks the truth, and the truth causes scandal, and people desert him; and he regrets having spoken the truth, and says to himself: "I ought not to have spoken in that way; I ought not to have said that." And yet that very thing happened to the Lord; He spoke and lost many of His disciples and kept only a few. But He did not trouble Himself, because He knew from the beginning who were the believing ones and who the unbelieving; while we upset ourselves if anything of the kind occurs. Let us find consolation in our Lord's example, but still let us speak with prudence.'

not the king of Israel for whom they had looked? Was He not after all the Messias?—or was He doubtful of His own mission and power? From this disturbed and divided crowd a few groups detached themselves, and followed Jesus to Capharnaum; only to become hearers of the discourse on the Bread of Life. This proved to be something incomparably more than they had imagined or suspected, and they were overwhelmed by the promises that He then made. Even the Apostles themselves felt the contagion of this scandalization; but they nearly all resisted it. But Judas, beyond all doubt, began to give way. Avaricious and full of self-interest, he saw the brilliant prospects of empire, in which he had revelled, vanishing into thin air, while the prize set before him by Christ was altogether beyond his ken. No doubt these words were spirit and life, but the carnal man cannot grasp the Spirit of God. However, at least the others remained faithful, and with Peter as their mouthpiece answered our Lord: 'To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' It was Peter's first confession. Soon another would follow, more solemn still. The crowd dispersed; large numbers of the disciples finally and definitely left our Lord: but at least those who remained were knit closer to Him, and began to penetrate more intimately into His mind.

IX. Genesareth.
Discussion with the Pharisees at Capharnaum.

The Synoptics do not record the discourse on the Bread of Life; but they relate that after the lake had been crossed Jesus approached Genesareth. As soon as He was seen to set out, His presence was made known, and as He went on His journey, sick were brought to Him from every part to be cured.

> 'And whithersoever He entered, into towns or into villages or cities, they laid the sick in the streets and besought Him that they might touch but the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made whole.' (Mark vi, 56; cp. Matt. xiv, 34–36.)

The district into which our Lord now came is called Genesar in several manuscripts, and many critics prefer this form.[1] It was the name of the lake, and also of the

[1] Cp. Dalman, *Itinéraires*, pp. 162 ff.

plain described by Josephus. Genesareth is not otherwise known, and that is a reason for here keeping this name, attested by the best manuscript tradition and in no sense invented.

The scene here briefly described resembles many others that we have already met. A great concourse of sick, and all cured ; while this sacred flesh that gives health to all who touch it, is none other than that lifegiving Flesh that Christ had promised to His faithful. Surely this story is the most persuasive commentary on the discourse that could be had. Apparently Jesus had no intention of stopping. His former journeys had been of the nature of missionary tours, but this time He was merely passing through the country. But the crowd recognized and followed Him.

In S. Mark (vii, 1–15) and S. Matthew (xv, 1–11) we find Jesus at Capharnaum, perhaps because it was the Sabbath Day. There He met the local Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem, who entered into a lively discussion with Him as to why His disciples ' transgressed the tradition of the ancients : " For they wash not their hands when they eat bread." '

This was one of those ritual observances of which the Pharisees were most tenacious. For anyone to neglect it was to cut himself off from their circle and to rank himself with the ' *am-ha-arez* ' or people of the land, who are actually defined by R. Meir (150) by the fact of their negligence of this tradition. ' Who,' says he, ' is an *am-ha-arez* ? He who eats his food with unwashed hands.'[1]

One incident, among many others, shows the capital importance attached to this tradition. When R. Akiba, old and sick, was being served in his prison by R. Joshua, the gaoler on one occasion reduced the ration of water by one half. ' Give me,' said Akiba to his disciple, ' some water to wash my hands.' ' But you have not even enough to drink,' was the reply. ' What matters that ? ' said Akiba, ' better that I should die of thirst than save my life by transgressing the maxims of my companions.'[2]

These precautions had their use in a country where all

[1] *Berakot*, 47*b*., bar., quoted by Billerbeck, I, p. 703. Cp. G. F. Moore, *Beginnings of Christianity*, I, p. 444.

[2] *Erubin*, 21*b*., bar., quoted by Billerbeck, I, 702. On the origin of these ablutions and details of their practice, cp. Billerbeck, I, pp. 695–702 ; on the purification of cups and plates, ibid., I, pp. 934–936, and Schürer, II, pp. 562 ff. ; on the ablutions at the end of a journey, ibid., II, p. 14.

the guests ate from the same plate and had no other implement than their fingers ; but the question here was not one of cleanliness or hygiene. It was religious scruples that were burdening souls.[1] The written law was silent on the subject, but oral tradition emphatic. The two great rival Rabbis Hillel and Shammai, who disagreed on most points, were unanimous on this question of the ablutions, and, shortly before the time of Christ, they together wrote eighteen decrees of the most pharisaic character.[2]

The scrupulous attention and extreme effort required by this legislation distracted attention from the essential precepts of the law. An historian who shows himself one of the most respectful to Judaism and even Pharisaism, G. F. Moore, writes :

' The effect of this legislation goes farther than this putting of all obligations in principle on the same plane. In all sects and in every *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, it is the peculiarities in doctrine, observance, or piety that are uppermost in the minds of the members: what they have in common with the great body is no doubt taken for granted, but, so to speak, lies in the sectarian subconsciousness ' (*Judaism*, II, p. 161).

It is to be observed that the scribes do not here directly attack Christ Himself. ' Why do not Thy disciples walk according to the tradition of the ancients ? ' Similarly, on the question of fasting, it was the disciples they approached, although in both cases the Master's conduct would be that of His disciples. Instead of trying to make Jesus conform to their precepts, they took the line of playing off one school among their opponents against another.

To these accusations our Lord gave no direct reply. Directly afterwards, when speaking to the crowd, He would make them see the emptiness of all these regulations, but here He raises the question to higher ground, showing the scribes that, in their false zeal for their own traditions, they were attacking the very law of God itself. ' . . . you say : If a man shall say to his father or mother : Corban (which is a gift) whatsoever is from me shall profit thee : ' This sentence, in its elliptical form, has often been misunderstood. All the suggested interpretations of it can be seen, for example, in Maldonatus. Really it is just the literal translation of the rabbinical formula to be found in the Talmud in the

[1] Cp. Montefiore, *The Synoptic Gospels*, I, 170 ff.
[2] Cp. Schürer, II, pp. 560 ff. ; Edersheim, II, pp. 9 ff.

Treatise *Nedarim*, viii, 7.[1] In the same treatise is related the story of a young man who had made this vow against his father. On the day of his marriage, he wanted to invite his father to dinner. To get over the difficulty, he formed the idea of pretending to give the hall where the dinner was to be held to a friend, so that his father might be able to attend. The friend refused, on the ground that this would be perjury. The case was discussed, and the rabbis came to the conclusion that any son who had taken such a vow could give nothing to his father, even by an intermediary, except in the case where the father was on the point of dying of hunger: then the son might give him something, not directly, but by a third person.[2]

The example just given, preserved for us by the Talmud itself, throws a vivid light on the discussion between our Lord and the scribes. What Christ was attacking was not some remote and doubtful consequence of their teaching, but that teaching itself, as they claimed to impose it upon the people, and as it was actually submitted to by them. Confronted with this immoral casuistry, Jesus opposes to it the Divine precept: 'Honour thy father and thy mother.' And He stresses the contrast by recalling the prophet's words: 'This people . . . with their lips glorify Me, but their heart is far from Me.'

This was one of the gravest conflicts recorded in the Gospel. For tradition was, in the eyes of the Jews, equal to, some said even greater, than the law. It imposed itself tyrannically on men's consciences, and every one of our Lord's hearers was accustomed to venerate it as the will of God Himself. And our Lord had not begun His ministry by denouncing it. His early efforts, as in the Sermon on the

[1] Corban, as Mark notes, means an offering made to God: cp. Jos., *Contra Ap.*, I, 22, 167: 'According to Theophrastus, the Tyrian laws forbade the employment of foreign formulas in the taking of oaths, among which, with others, he reckoned the oath called Korban. Now nowhere will you find this except among the Jews. Translated from the Hebrew, the word means 'present to God.' On this passage L. Blum notes: 'More precisely (cp. Levit. i, 10; ii, 4; iii) "present *offered* to God," object consecrated to God, and consequently not to be touched, taboo; cp. Mishnah, *Nedarim*, passim, and the Gospels of Mark vii, 9–12; Matt. xv, 4, 5.' 'Among the different causes,' writes Lagrange, quoting *Nedarim*, 'we find expressly Mark's formula: "Qonas! (an abridged form of Corban) if you derive any advantage from me." Taking the matter literally, it is forbidden to render a service, for example, to provide a father or mother with food, because this advantage that they might have hoped for was consecrated to God in advance.'

[2] Billerbeck, I, 711, 716.

Mount, were directed, not to freeing His hearers from the humanly-devised burden that was crushing them to the earth, but to accustom them to His own easy yoke. Still, He had had no care to make His disciples submit to all these rabbinical prescriptions ; from which, on the contrary, He had freed them by His counsel, and probably by His example as well ; and when the rabbis made this a ground of complaint, far from shirking the discussion or making excuses, our Lord took the occasion to call His hearers back to the Divine law, so misinterpreted and disfigured by all these traditions of a purely human kind. And, not content with this, He calls the people to Him with the words :

> 'Hear ye Me all and understand. There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him. But the things which come from a man, those are they that defile a man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.' (Mark vii, 14–16.)

This declaration was a peculiarly solemn one, and had an immense effect. 'The rupture between Jesus and the Pharisees was complete.'[1]

It was no longer a question of ritual ablutions imposed by the traditions of the ancients, but of meats pure and impure prescribed by the levitical legislation itself. This legislation was sacred, and to defend it the Machabean martyrs had given their lives (1 Mach. i, 62 ff. ; 2 Mach. vii, 6) ; and yet its function was of a merely pedagogic kind. Salutary for an infant people, it would have hindered the progress of the Gospel and the liberty of Christians. It was about to give way to a superior principle ; which has been described by a Jewish commentator as being of decisive greatness and significance.[2] The religious change thus inaugurated has been well described by Victor : 'From henceforth,' he says, 'has begun the law of the spirit, which no longer looks to bodily purification, or distinction of foods, but to the virtue of the spirit. . . . The Old Law was concerned above all with the exterior man ; our Redeemer's precepts with the interior. And indeed the hour was approaching when the Cross would put an end to all that was corporeal, so that henceforth, putting aside the body, the faithful might become simple spirit.'

This principle was proclaimed by Jesus in a solemn and

[1] Klausner, p. 291. [2] Montefiore, I, 173.

enigmatic form, which He made still more emphatic by the final exhortation which He usually employed on such occasions: 'If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear.' The people were little prepared to free themselves from bonds, up to that time regarded as sacred; even the Apostles themselves were slow to understand, hesitating to put into practice a rule of life at once so novel and so bold (Acts x, 14 ff.). For the moment, the Lord was content to scatter the seed, and leave it to spring up. 'And when He was come into the house from the multitude, His disciples asked Him the parable. And He saith to them: So you also are without knowledge' (Mark vii, 17, 18).[1] On the lake, Jesus had reproached His disciples for their hardness of heart, and this occasion, too, finds them still without understanding; but at least they were not, like the Pharisees, voluntarily blind; they questioned their Master as soon as they were alone with Him, as they had done before after the parables of the kingdom; and once more He told them the true interpretation of His words, this time with an insistence which the troubled state of consciences rendered necessary. 'The anxiety to avoid ceremonial impurity had become overwhelming, and had a paralysing effect on the soul's relation with God. . . . Men were more concerned to avoid such uncleanness than to practise virtue. So Jesus declares, with an energy and realism far from usual with Him, that food is destined merely for the belly and eventually for the privy; thus drawing a firm line of demarcation between the physical and the moral life.'[2]

At the same time it is to be observed that, in stressing this point, our Lord has no further aim than to impress the principle upon His hearers, without applying it in any precise terms. That would need a long process under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Later, S. Paul would take up this point, pushing it still further in the circle most prepared to receive it.

> 'All things are lawful to Me: but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful to Me; but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meat for the belly and the body for the meats: but God shall destroy both it and them.' (1 Cor. vi, 12, 13.)

[1] According to Matthew, xv, 15, it is S. Peter who speaks, questioning our Lord in the name of all; as usual, S. Mark is reticent about Peter's personal *rôle*.

[2] Lagrange, *S. Marc, in hoc loco*.

S. Matthew adds the incident of the condemnation of the Pharisees to the narrative as given in S. Mark. The disciples had seemed intimidated by their attitude :

> ' . . . Dost Thou know that the Pharisees, when they heard this word, were scandalized ? But He answering, said : Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone : they are blind and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit.' (Matt. xv, 12–14.)

The first of these remarks of our Lord recalls the parable of the cockle to the disciples, in a form familiar to them. Israel had been planted by Almighty God ; they themselves would plant in their turn (1 Cor. iii, 6). God would bless this plant, but the enemy would try to tear it up. ' He will persecute the plantations that the twelve Apostles of the well-Beloved will plant ' (Asc. Is. iv, 3).

The second remark—which is also a proverbial expression —is differently expressed in Luke vi, 39. S. Paul will say to the Jews : ' Art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind ' (Rom. ii, 19).[1]

[1] A peasant of Galilee once said to R. Chisda : ' When the Shepherd is angry with His sheep, He makes their guide blind ' (*Baba P. Qama*, 52*a*. Billerbeck, I, 721).

Lagrange compares these passages of the Gospel with a *logion* found at Oxyrhyncus, and published in 1905 by Grenfell and Hunt (*R.B.*, 1908, 538) :

' Taking them with Him, He brought them into the proper place of purification, and walked in the Temple. Now a Pharisee named Levi (?), who was high priest, coming forward joined them and said to the Saviour : " Who has permitted you to tread this place of purification and to look upon these sacred vessels without having bathed, and when thy disciples have not even washed their feet ? Being yourself in a state of impurity you have trodden the courts of this temple which is a sacred place, and which no one may tread except after having taken a bath and changed his clothes ; without which he may not have the audacity to look upon these sacred vessels." And the Saviour, at once stopping with His disciples, answered him : " Are you, who are in the temple, pure then ? " And he replied : " I am pure, for I have bathed in the pool of David and having gone down by one stairway, I came up by another and I put on garments white and clean, and then I came here, and have beheld these sacred vessels." And the Saviour answered and said : " Ill be to the eyes that see not. You have washed in these running waters where day and night they throw dogs and pigs, and having taken a bath you have cleaned the outward skin, which courtesans too, and female flute-players, anoint and clean, and prepare to rouse the passions of men. But inwardly they are full of scorpions and every evil thing. But as for me and My disciples, who, you say, have not washed, we have bathed in the waters of eternal life." '

There is nothing to show the date or place of origin of this fragment ; it is to be noted that indications of place and time are, as a general rule, merely probable ones ; Preuschen (*Z.n.t.W.*, 1908, 11) sees here a fragment

The incident we have just related is of considerable significance in the Gospel history, and especially in the training of the Apostles. It forced upon them the conviction that from henceforth the one essential thing is the innermost effort of the soul, and no longer ritual prescriptions. These are the protection of the spiritual life, but can never be its substitute. How long and how many graces it needed to understand this new doctrine, the history of the early days of the Church shows us clearly enough. More especially we may recall S. Peter's vision at Joppa (Acts x, 11). Three times he saw the great linen sheet stretched between earth and sky and offering to him 'all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things of the earth, and fowls of the air.' Three times he heard the voice that bade him: 'Arise, kill and eat'; and three times he answered: 'Far be it from me. For I never did eat anything common or unclean;' and yet again three times a voice was heard conveying the stern command: 'That which God hath cleansed, do not thou call common.' It was this vision that dispersed the prejudices of Peter's upbringing and tradition, and made him understand that he must regard no man as necessarily unclean. So this teaching of our Lord was the symbol of a higher lesson still: not only the dietary laws, but all other barriers, too, were to fall before the Apostles, and open the pagan world to their evangelistic work.

of Jerusalemic tradition analogous to that which we meet in John. Lagrange is more reserved: 'Since the terms used give the impression that we have here a picture true to life, the passage in question would, in its own way, go to prove the existence of a tradition allied to that of S. John, or at least occupying a place between S. John and the Synoptics. None the less, for my part, I should be reluctant to regard the conversation as quite authentic.' And he goes on to say that he believes he can recognize certain common features between the fragment and the Gospel according to the Hebrews. In any case, it is a different lesson from that presented by the Synoptics; with them 'the question is to know what it is that defileth; here it is rather to know what purifies' (551).

CHAPTER IX

THE GREAT REVELATIONS

I. The Pool of Bethsaida.[1]

THE dispute that we have just recounted had caused a rupture between Jesus and the Pharisees of Galilee, and now a similar conflict was to break out at Jerusalem. There the observance of the Sabbath was the starting-point of the discussion ; but our Lord was to give it a deeper significance still, by affirming His union with the Father and His Divine mission here on earth. Confronted with these assertions, which the Father in heaven supported by miracles, the Pharisees were soon in revolt, shouting blasphemies and clamouring for Jesus' death. It was the herald-storm of the great catastrophe, and—to change the metaphor—the first act of the tragedy to be played out in Jerusalem before the close of this decisive year. After the feast that Christ was about to celebrate (v, 1) there would be Tabernacles (ch. vii) and then the Dedication (ch. x) ; after the cure of the paralytic, that of the man born blind (ch. ix), and then the raising of Lazarus (ch. xi). Through all these incidents, the revelation of the Son of God would become ever more luminous and clear ; enlightening souls of good-will, wounding unto death others who, loving darkness rather than light, sought to put out its shining within their souls. These enemies of Christ and their chief, the prince of this world, were having their hour—' the hour of darkness ' ; but this triumph of a moment would be their condemnation through every age, while our Lord's punishment would be His glory.

This conflict, so painful and yet so glorious, lends a tragic tone to these chapters of S. John. We are far from Galilee and its peaceful preaching on the mountain-side

[1] John v. We have explained above (p. xxix) the reasons for placing this incident after the discourse on the Bread of Life, and, in consequence, transposing chapters v and vi of S. John. In this we are following Ludolph the Carthusian, and many exegetical writers of to-day.

and by the lake ; on the contrary, we are in Jerusalem, in the Holy City, but also in the city that killed the prophets. God's Son was making a last effort to save the city of the Great King ; He failed, and there was nothing left for Him but to weep over her, and to die.

'After these things was a festival day of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem' (John v, 1). There is nothing to indicate more precisely what this festival was. Some commentators identify it with the Passover,[1] others with Pentecost,[2] others again with the New Year, or Purim.[3] These problematical identifications are of small importance ; the whole interest of the episode is concentrated in the revelation of the Son of God : the miraculous cure of the paralytic, the opposition that it aroused, and above all, the declaration about His nature and mission made by our Lord Himself.

'Now there is at Jerusalem a pond called Probatica, which in Hebrew is named Bethsaida, having five porches.' This detailed description of S. John, supplemented two centuries later by Origen, has been confirmed in our own time by archæological investigations,[4] and, under the shadow of the basilica of S. Anne, the pilgrims love to venerate the scene of this miracle of our Lord. Among many other sick, 'blind, lame, withered,' was a paralytic lying close to the pool ;[5] he had been thus infirm for thirty-eight years. To Jesus' question as to whether he wished to be cured, the answer could not be doubtful ; but our Lord deliberately stimulated his desire, in order to arouse his faith. 'Sir,' he replied, 'I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pond. For whilst I am coming, another goeth down before me.' Then Jesus bade him : 'Arise, take up thy bed, and walk.' And immediately the man was made whole : and he took up his bed and walked. But '*it was the Sabbath that day.*'

[1] Bernard. Cp. Lagrange, *S. Jean*, p. 132 : If we read ἡ ἑορτή, 'this would be the Feast of the Passover spoken of as "near" in vi, 4. On the other hand, if we read ἑορτή, Jesus would have let the Passover go by, and would have come to Jerusalem for Pentecost.'

[2] Lagrange, *L'Evangile de Jésus-Christ*, p. 228.

[3] Durand, *S. Jean*, p. 141.

[4] Vincent and Abel, *Jérusalem*, III, 4, pp. 685 ff.

[5] Verse 4 attributes the curative power of the freshly-disturbed water to the presence of the angel of the Lord. This verse, and the end of verse 3, are for the most part lacking in the Greek tradition, manuscripts, and commentaries ; and its authenticity is discussed, even among Catholics. See Lagrange, Durand, etc.

That last simple sentence introduces the conflict that was about to break out. The Jews, that is the Pharisees, met this man carrying his bed, and immediately a vivid dialogue took place. 'It is the Sabbath. It is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed.' 'He that made me whole, He said to me: Take up thy bed and walk.' 'And who is this man who said to thee, Take up thy bed and walk?' It mattered little to them that the man had been cured; they were aghast at the breaking of their cherished traditions. But the paralytic did not know who his benefactor was, for Jesus had gone away. He was not hidden, however, but was in the Temple; where the man, seeing Him, knew Him again and went to tell the Jews.

No doubt our Lord's enemies had already recognized His hand in the miracle, or at least suspected that it was His work; and now there is no more room for doubt. Once more He has transgressed their precepts, and, in the midst of Jerusalem, sustained His claims by a miracle. 'Therefore,' says S. John, 'did the Jews persecute Jesus, because He did these things on the Sabbath.' But His answer was: 'My Father worketh until now, and I work.'

This unceasing activity of Almighty God had been spoken of by the Jewish theologians more than once,[1] and no one was surprised at our Lord's assertion of it; what was new and, to the Pharisees, revolting, was the equality thus established between the Father and Himself, and they burst into indignant protest at once.[2]

It was to this fundamental question of the relations between the Father and the Son that the discussion had been directed by Christ, and He kept it on this ground.

The freedom as to Sabbath observance, claimed by our Lord, had put the Pharisees in a state of excitement; but this complaint, grave as it was for them, paled before these still more significant claims. And here lies the distinction between the controversies of Jerusalem and the discussions of Galilee. At Capharnaum, everything turned on legal observances, the Sabbath ablutions, fasting, and so

[1] For example, Philo, *Allégories des saintes lois*, I, 5 (Mangey, I, p. 44); *de Cherubim*, 87 (p. 154).

[2] During the controversy against the Arians, the Fathers frequently insisted upon this affirmation of the identity of action between the Son and the Father; this interpretation had been already familiarized by Origen: *Princip.*, I, 2–6 (p. 35, 1); cp. *In Joan.*, XIII, 36 (p. 261, 11).

forth. Here, in the Temple, it was a matter of fundamental theology, of the mission and the nature of the Son of God, and that from the very first. 'Hereupon, therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill Him . . . because He . . . said God was His Father, making Himself equal to God.' And six months later, at the Feast of Dedication they tell Him: '. . . we stone Thee . . . because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God' (x, 33).

We are not surprised that these affirmations of our Lord are more explicit here than when He was speaking to the Galilean crowd. Those now before Him are by no means timid peasants, seeking the truth about religion, tentatively, but in good faith. No, they were masters in Israel, passing their life in the study of the Scriptures (v, 39); so the controversy they press upon Him calls forth more categorical replies, of which their knowledge is sufficient to enable them to grasp the true sense. If they are scandalized, their scandal does not in any way arise from some deficiency which calls for sympathy, but from bad faith that is without excuse.

And, as a matter of fact, the Pharisees saw plainly enough what the tendency of our Lord's words was. As S. Augustine later put it to the Arians: 'The Pharisees saw what you refuse to see.'[1] They rejected our Lord's witness, but they understood its bearing perfectly well. The attitude of the Pharisees is for us an historical fact of great value. In the discourse on the Bread of Life shortly before, the real significance of our Lord's words is confirmed by the nature of the objections raised: 'How can this man give us His flesh to eat?' (vi, 53); and instead of telling His hearers that they were mistaken, He insists: 'Amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you.' The objection, and our Lord's insistence, shows us that He does really give us His Body and Blood. And it is the same thing with the discourse at Jerusalem. 'You make yourself equal to God, nay God Himself,' said the Pharisees in effect, and Jesus, instead of answering that they had not understood Him correctly, only repeated what He had said before. But, as in the former discourse, He explained it to them, and showed

[1] 'Ecce intelligunt Iudæi quod non intelligunt Ariani. Ariani quippe inæqualem Patri Filium dicunt, et inde hæresis est pulsa de Ecclesia. Ecce ipsi cæci, ipsi interfectores Christi, intellexerunt tamen verba Christi' (*In Ioann.*, tract. xvii, 16, P.L., XXXV, 1535).

His hearers that there was nothing there in which they could find just cause for scandal.

The discourse in chapter v can be divided into two parts : in the first, Jesus makes Himself known in His relation with His Father and with men (19–30) ; in the second, He produces His proofs, at the same time denouncing the blindness of the Pharisees and its cause (31–47). 'Amen, amen, I say unto you, the Son cannot do anything of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing : for what things soever He doth, these the Son also doth in like manner.' These words should have guided any listeners of good will towards the understanding of this mystery, which seemed to them insoluble and disturbing to faith. 'My Father worketh until now, and I work,' had been our Lord's words, and immediately the Jews had protested that He was making Himself equal with God. But when He went on to say that whatsoever the Father did, He did also, He was making it clear that He was speaking not only of equality, but of identity of action—action unique in character, which was the work of two persons mutually loving and enjoying one another. 'For the Father loveth the Son and showeth Him all things which Himself doth.' On another occasion He had said : 'neither doth anyone know the Father but the Son ; ' only the Son's regard, in all its infinite depth, can penetrate the Being and action of the Father. And soon will appear greater works still : the universal judgement, following the resurrection of the dead. 'For as the Father raiseth up the dead and giveth life ; so the Son also giveth life to whom He will ; for neither doth the Father judge any man : but hath given all judgement to the Son. . . . For as the Father hath life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself, and He hath given power to do judgement because He is the Son of Man' (v, 21, 22 ; 26, 27).

These words warn us that Jesus is speaking of His human nature, and not of His Divine nature alone. And, indeed, throughout the discourse there is no question of any division of Christ. Its principal subject is the Son's divinity, but His humanity appears, too, in those characteristics that are properly its own. For the Son of God is the life-giving principle by which He communicates life to all men, living and dead : He is 'the resurrection and the life ; '[1] also it

[1] xi, 25. Cp. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, I, pp. 510–516.

is through this humanity that He is constituted, by the Father, King and Judge of all men. 'The Father,' says S. Irenæus, 'has willed that His Word should become visible to all flesh, by being Himself incarnate, so that the whole universe may know its king. For it must needs be that those who are to be judged must see their judge; and that those who attain to glory must know Him who gives them the glory.'[1]

Further, these prerogatives of the Son of Man, who gives life to whom He will, and who judges the whole human race, are by no means a privilege *delegated* to Him by the Supreme Being as to a subordinate agent: it is the exercise, by the Son of God made man, of a power truly Divine. If we enquire into its nature and scope, we shall find in it nothing that is not transcendent, nothing that does not show forth the same divinity in the Son as in the Father. 'He hath given to the Son . . . to have life in Himself.' The greatest saints—a S. Paul, for example—live not in themselves, but in Christ, and so are never severed from Him. 'Christ has the life in Himself, like the Father, because He is the Word of God.'[2] 'What difference is there, then, between the Father and the Son? None, except that the Father in generating the Son gives Him life, and the Son receives it from the Father.'[3]

And the religious consequences of this doctrine have characteristics subtle, but at the same time strongly marked. The same honour is due to the Father and the Son: all men must 'honour the Son as they honour the Father' (23); while the object of the act of faith is equally the Father and the Son; we receive the Son's word, we believe in the Father and are saved.[4]

The idea of salvation appears now in the distant perspective of the final judgement (25), now in the present discernment of the faithful (24), and all is fused in the unity of

[1] *Hær.*, III, 9, i (P.G., VII, 869, 870). Cp. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, II, p. 599.

[2] S. Augustine, tract. xxii, 9 (P.L., XXXV, 1579).

[3] *Ibid.*, 10: 'Sicut habet Pater vitam in semetipso, sic dedit et Filio habere vitam in semetipso; ut non participatione vivat, sed incommutabiliter vivat; et omnino ipse vita sit. . . . Sicut habet, sic dedit. Quid interest? Quia ille dedit, iste accepit.'

[4] 'He who heareth My word and believeth Him that sent Me hath life everlasting, and cometh not unto judgement' (verse 24); cp. 'He that believeth in Him is not judged. But he that doth not believe is already judged' (iii, 18): 'He that believeth in the Son hath life everlasting' (iii, 36).

the one same faith, just as the Divine and human prærogatives of Christ are in no way opposed to each other, but radiate from the same glory, received from the Father by His Only-begotten Son.

Nor are there wanting witnesses to guarantee these lofty claims. Jesus recalls the testimony of John, not to fortify His own position : ' I receive not testimony from man ' (34) ; but to assure the salvation of His hearers. John has vanished now : ' He was a burning and a shining light : and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.' Alas ! for that joy of a day, that empty satisfaction which failed to convert these souls without depth. ' But I have a greater testimony than that of John : for the works which the Father hath given me to perfect, the works themselves which I do give testimony of Me, that the Father hath sent Me ' (36). This argument from His works is frequently invoked by Christ[1] and indeed it is decisive ; but it only has weight with those of good faith. The Pharisees were uninfluenced by it. They did not intend to believe in Him whom the Father had sent, and so God's word did not abide in them.[2]

They searched the Scriptures, and the Scriptures gave testimony of Christ : ' everywhere in the Scripture we find the seed of the Son of God ; '[3] but the Jews did not understand, and ' would not come ' to Christ (40), the reason of this blindness being that they cared only for the opinion of men, and not for the glory of God : ' How can you believe who receive glory from another : and the glory which is from God alone you do not seek ' (v, 44).

In other discourses Christ will hurl the most terrible anathemas against the Pharisees, but nowhere will He reveal more clearly the source of their blindness : that pride in learning and legal acumen which generates in a man the one ambition of winning the applause of his equals, without any care of the approval of Almighty God. This, too, is one of those passages which show most clearly,

[1] So in His reply to John the Baptist's messengers (Matt. xi, 5) ; in the discourse to the Jews, at the Feast of Dedication (John x, 25, 38) ; in the discourse after the Last Supper (xiv, 11).

[2] Verse 38. To these same adversaries Jesus would say later : ' My Word hath no place in you ' (viii, 37) ; on the other hand, the disciples kept the Father's word (xvii, 6), and Christ's (viii, 51, 52 ; xiv, 23, 24 ; xv, 20) ; and they continued in it (viii, 31).

[3] Irenæus, *Hær.*, IV, 10, 1 (P.G., VII, 1000). Cp. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, II, p. 595.

by force of contrast, the sole concern of Christ Himself: to do the good pleasure of the Father and seek His glory alone.

Our Lord would in no way make Himself the accuser of these men; that *rôle* was filled by Moses, in whom they placed their hope: 'for if you did believe Moses, you would perhaps believe me also, for he wrote of Me.' Later, He would speak in the same strain to the Jews at Jerusalem, when they put His claim in opposition to those of Abraham: 'Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it and was glad' (viii, 56). All the holy patriarchs and prophets had lived in this desire and in this contemplation of the Son of God. Some months later, Moses and Elias would appear at the Transfiguration at Jesus' side; an incident which would reveal to the three Apostles who witnessed it the true meaning of the Old Testament, wholly orientated towards Christ, and lighted up by Him.

II. The Chanaanitish woman.

The brief stay at Jerusalem, which, following John, we have just related, had interrupted the Galilean ministry for several days. The Synoptics, who, following their usual plan, have left unmentioned the expedition to Judea, continue their narrative and so enable us to follow the movements of our Lord: 'And rising from thence He went into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon' (Mark vii, 24). In other words, the journey begun in the plains of Genesareth had been proceeded with, and now we see it issuing in the country of Tyre and Sidon. It is easy to see what our Lord's purpose was. Threatened by the growing hostility of the Pharisees and by Herod's suspicions, He left Galilee, at least for a time, to pursue in peace the work of the training of His Apostles to which He was to devote Himself from henceforth.

Consequently, He retired to the country of Phenice, where it was His intention to remain hidden for a time. For it was part of His plan to reserve His personal ministry to the Jews, and if, occasionally, He allowed individual pagans to profit by it, this was in the nature of an exceptional departure from His rule. Such favours were only crumbs dropped from the children's table. It was thus that He had dealt with the centurion at Capharnaum, and with the demoniac at Gergesa, and now it was to be so once again with the

Chanaanitish woman. It was not only that He wished to put her faith to trial, but above all He was applying a rule of conduct traced for Him by His Father, and habitually respected by Him. 'I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel' (Matt. xv, 24).[1] Still, He was anxious to secure to this soul of good will the succour she implored, and the faith of which she stood in need.[2]

What we know about Tyre throws light on the attitude of Christ and His disciples in such a matter as this. Josephus, in his book against Apion, declares that 'especially he will invoke the Egyptians and the Phœnicians, whose witness cannot be set aside; indeed it is clear that the Egyptians without exception, and, among the Phœnicians, those of Tyre have the worst possible dispositions in our regard' (*Ap.*, I, 13, 70). Not only, then, were our Lord and His followers in a foreign country, but in a truly hostile one.

To resume the narrative, the Chanaanitish woman learnt of Jesus' presence and followed Him with her cries, calling Him 'Son of David,' a title that Matthew records as given on two occasions to our Lord (ix, 27; xii, 23), both times by Jews. Here it is used by a pagan woman who, no doubt, was only repeating what she had heard her Jewish neighbours say. This messianic mode of address, with its nationalist implications, no doubt prepared the way for our Lord's reply. The Son of David owes nothing except to those of David's race.

However, the disciples, harassed by the woman's cries, urged Jesus to get rid of her, probably by granting what she asked; but He replied: 'I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel.' This exclusiveness of His mission will be asserted many more times by our Lord. When, for example, on the eve of His Passion, certain Gentiles asked to be allowed to see our Lord at His triumphal

[1] Cp. R.S.R., 1931, pp. 33 ff.

[2] This suppliant, so humble and persevering in her faith, has become a model for Christians, and a legend about her soon arose. The author of the Clementine Homilies (II, 19–20, cp. III, 73) asserts that the woman's name was Justa, and her daughter's Berenice. He considers that, by her remarks about the dogs eating the crumbs that fall from the children's table, she was obliged thenceforth to live as a Jewess. She left her husband, who would not agree to this, while her daughter married a faithful but poor Jew. She herself adopted two poor children, whom she brought up as her sons, and who became disciples of Simon Magus. It is quite interesting to see, in this romance, an example of the eagerness of the Judaizing party to claim, as an adherent to their rites, the very woman who appears to us in the Gospels as the first-fruits of the Gentile world.

entry into Jerusalem, not daring to approach Him directly they went to Philip, who told Andrew, and the two together passed on the request to Christ, who without replying directly, let it be known that it was only by His Passion and Death that He would 'draw all things' to Himself (John xii, 23–32). A little before, the same evangelist records the 'Good Shepherd' discourse (John x, 16). 'And other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring. And they shall hear My voice: and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.' And in His last prayer to His Father He says: 'And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me' (xvii, 20). So always in our Lord's mind the perspective of His apostolate was as large as the world; but it was His death alone that would open to His Gospel this immense field. His own part, in the short years of His active ministry, was to keep to the narrow limits of the people of Israel and the Holy Land. From thence in due time a spring of life would flow over the whole world, but that very spring itself needed feeding first; in other words, the Apostles must first be trained, that they may make their message heard to the utmost limits of the world.

But the poor woman persisted in her suit. No longer following behind Jesus, she came and prostrated herself at His feet, imploring Him to come to her aid. And the Lord's reply, at first, seems hard enough: 'Suffer first the children to be filled: for it is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the dogs.' Nothing daunted, the woman replied: 'Yea, Lord: for the whelps also eat under the table of the crumbs of the children'; and her answer won the response: 'For this saying go thy way. The devil is gone out of thy daughter' (Mark vii, 27–29).[1]

Our Lord graciously welcomed the woman's reply and praised her faith; and we may notice here, as in other passages of the Gospel, that when He seems to refuse petitions in the severest way, it was because He foresaw and was sustaining the perseverance of the suppliant. A Jewish writer has set down his impressions of this story:

'The story is one of great beauty and charm. Whence

[1] Victor comments thus on this reply: 'I am happy to be counted a little dog; for that at least shows that I belong to the house, and that I eat from the Master's table, if not bread, at least crumbs; for the Lord's table is so rich that a crumb suffices me.'

this wonderful attractiveness of so much of the Gospel narrative, this marvellous combination of power and simplicity? Whence this impression of *first-classness*, of inspiration? Surely because the Gospels are the early result of the impression produced by a great and inspired personality. However uncertain it may be whether what we read in any single passage was really said or done by Jesus, only a real Jesus could have caused the Gospel. Without Jesus, there would have been no Mark.'[1]

On leaving Tyre our Lord followed the coast towards the north as far as Sidon, from whence a road led to the Jordan. Following this, through the Decapolis, He regained the lake. During this journey He would often find Himself outside Herod's territory and in a half-pagan land, but, even there, His coming through the country was not unnoticed, and sick were brought to Him to be cured. The particular cure related here by S. Mark is that of a deaf man, who also spoke with difficulty. Jesus took him on one side, and then, in the words of the Gospel:

> 'And taking him from the multitude apart, He put His fingers into his ears: and spitting, He touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, He groaned and said to him: Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened. And immediately his ears were opened and the string of his tongue was loosed and he spoke right. And He charged them that they should tell no man. But the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it. And so much the more did they wonder, saying: He hath done all things well. He hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.' (Mark vii, 33–37.)

In connection with this miracle, Maldonatus has noted that Christ 'in some way accommodated His power to the mode of action of natural causes, as well as to the thoughts and customs of men.' It may be added that He wished to honour His holy humanity by using it as an instrument. 'He could,' remarks Victor, 'have worked the miracle by a single word, but He wanted to show that the body He had taken into union with Himself was rich with Divine power.' It was thus that He made use of it in the miracle, recorded by S. John (ix, 6), of the man born blind.

[1] Montefiore, *Synoptic Gospels*, I, p. 181.

III. The Feeding of the Four Thousand.

The events that we have just related are to be found in S. Matthew and S. Mark, with the exception of the last—the cure of the deaf man—which is recorded by Mark alone. In S. Luke we find nothing that occurs in Mark's account from the Feeding of the Five Thousand (Mark vi, 44; Luke ix, 17) up to S. Peter's confession at Cæsarea (Mark viii, 27; Luke ix, 18). On the other hand, Matthew, with the exception, noted above, relates the facts in the same order as Mark. Immediately after the story of the Chanaanitish woman, he goes on:

> 'And when Jesus had passed away from thence, He came nigh the sea of Galilee. And going up into a mountain, He sat there. And there came to Him great multitudes, having with them the dumb, the blind, the lame, the maimed and many others. And they cast them down at His feet. And He healed them. So that the multitudes marvelled, seeing the dumb speak, the lame walk, the blind see. And they glorified the God of Israel.' (Matt. xv, 29–31.)

Matthew, who makes no mention of the journey, or the cure of the deaf man, lays stress on the gathering of the crowd. The Lord is no longer on pagan soil, but back among His own people once more; seated on a Galilean mountain, and surrounded by crowds of Jews; and His miracles are no longer crumbs dropped for strangers, but the children's bread distributed without stint. The significance of these deeds of wonder was emphasized by the burden of the people's cry, in which they glorified the God of Israel, an expression that is an echo of the Old Testament and very real in the New (Luke i, 68; Acts xiii, 17). It showed that the people were still faithful to the God who had chosen them, and had sent His Messias to their aid. It was in the midst of this crowd and after these miracles that our Lord once more performed a miraculous multiplication of loaves (Matt. xv, 32–39; Mark viii, 1–10).

The resemblances between this feeding of the multitude and the first are certainly striking; but beyond question there are differences, too.[1] None the less, the majority of

[1] Jerome (112) thus sums them up: 'Supra legimus: vespere autem facto, accesserunt ad eum discipuli dicentes: Desertus est locus, et reliqua; hic discipulis convocatis ipse Dominus loquitur: Misereor turbæ, quia

non-Catholic critics regard the present narrative as a duplicate of the preceding one.[1] The strongest argument in favour of there having been two distinct events of the kind, is the fact of the presence of two such narratives in the Gospels both of Matthew and Mark, and the reminder, later on, of the two miracles in such a way as to distinguish them clearly from each other (Matt. xvi, 9, 10; Mark viii, 19, 20). It is worth while too, to notice the different attitude of the Apostles in the two cases. This point is well put by S. Chrysostom (525), who points out that, in the first case, the Apostles bid our Lord: 'Send away the multitudes,' which is not the case here. Perhaps they themselves had become better; perhaps they saw that the crowd, in its readiness to glorify God, was less impatient and, generally, better disposed. In this case it is Christ who takes the initiative by remarking: 'I have compassion on the multitude,' and He waited three days to say that, so that the provisions should be exhausted and the miracle be more necessary and more clear. Still, the Apostles, although thus put on their guard, did not understand even yet; they were still 'creeping on the ground,' and although they had witnessed the previous miracle, it had not opened their eyes.

It is this blindness that appears to the critics as the most improbable feature of all. But it should be observed that we find the miracles of Christ all the more striking, perhaps, because, as they stand in the Gospels, they give the impression of an uninterrupted series, whereas the impression would have been different upon the companions of His daily life. No doubt they were witnesses of many miracles; yet

triduo iam perseverant mecum. Ibi quinque panes erant et duo pisces: hic septem panes et pauci pisciculi. Ibi super fenum discumbunt; hic super terram. Ibi qui comedunt quinque millia sunt, iuxta panum numerum quos comedunt; hic quatuor millia. Ibi duodecim cophini replentur de reliquiis fragmentorum: hic septem sportæ. In superiori ergo signo, quia propinqui erant et vicini quinque sensuum, non ipse Dominus eorum recordatur, sed discipuli; et recordantur vespere vicina nocte, et inclinante iam sole. Hic autem ipse Dominus recordatur et misereri se dicit et causam miserationis exponit.'

[1] So even Turner, of these writers one of the most respectful to the text of Scripture and to tradition. His view is that from vii, 24, to viii, 10, Mark has followed a source other than Peter: *A New Commentary*, pp. 76, 77. That we have here two events is however the view of Plummer, as also of Edersheim, who thinks that the two crowds were not composed of the same persons, those at the first miracle being Jews, and at the second pagans from the Decapolis; not a very likely theory, in view of Matthew's statement that the crowd present at the miracles glorified the God of Israel.

the ordinary course of His and their life was subject to common needs, and they were taken by surprise by each fresh manifestation of supernatural power, especially when not preceded by any special act of prayer.

After the miracle, Jesus crossed the lake, and landed on the western shore ; a group of Pharisees, probably from a neighbouring town, approached Him with the demand that He should give them a sign (Mark viii, 11–13 ; Matt. xvi, 1–4). Probably, on this, as on the previous occasions, the excitement caused by the multiplication of food was considerable, and our Lord's adversaries meant to control and check it if they could. It was in this spirit that, after the feeding of the five thousand, the Jews asked Him to work a miracle comparable to that of Moses when he gave manna to their fathers.[1]

Our Lord's reply is just what we have met before in His dealings with the Pharisees. He encouraged weak and faltering faith, and consoled the unhappy ; but He had nothing to give to curiosity, or to the presumption of this 'evil and adulterous generation.' 'You know,' He tells them, 'how to discern the face of the sky ; and can you not know the signs of the times ?' He wanted to remind the Jews that signs had by no means been wanting to them ; but that they had not been willing to see them, and the responsibility was their own. Yet our Lord's severe words are spoken with a great sadness of heart. For many a month He has dispensed His gifts of teaching and miracle on these shores, and all in vain, at least for many of the Jews. And so, leaving these enemies of His with their bad faith, He crosses the lake to the eastern side.

'And they forgot to take bread : and they had but one loaf with them in the ship. And He charged them, saying : Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, saying : Because we have no bread. Which Jesus knowing, saith to them : Why do you reason, because you have no bread ? Do you not yet know nor understand ? Have you still your heart blinded ? Having eyes, see you not ? And having ears, hear you not ? Neither do you remember ? When I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took you up ? They say to Him : Twelve. When also the

[1] A plea excusing this request can be read in Edersheim, I, 187.

seven loaves among four thousand, how many baskets of fragments took you up? And they say to Him: Seven. And He said to them: How do you not yet understand?' (Mark viii, 14–21. Cp. Matt. xvi, 5–12.)

If the event immediately preceding the above has shown us the blindness of the Pharisees, we see something here of the Apostles' obduracy. It is an echo of the scene on the lake after the feeding of the five thousand; ' . . . they understood not concerning the loaves: for their heart was blinded' (Mark vi, 52).

We are not to conclude from this incident that Jesus did not wish His disciples to make proper provision for a journey. He certainly did not mean habitually to feed them by miracles. So His reproach was not on account of their want of care to bring bread with them, but because they thought of nothing else, reducing all His religious lessons to an exclusive preoccupation of this kind. He seized the occasion, as He had so many others, to awaken their attention, and to put them on their guard against a blindness from which the lessons of even the most striking miracles were hid.

This was how Jesus trained His Apostles, with a patience that knew no bounds. Never did any of them, even Judas, receive a rebuff from Him. But on occasion, He warned them with all the clear-sightedness and firmness of a Master who knew their weakness and wished to cure it. These warnings were graven in Peter's memory, as well as the unbelief that had called them forth, and throughout S. Mark's gospel we are conscious of the noble indignation of the Apostle, which would not let him forgive himself for this prolonged obduracy, and which he confessed with an insistence that knew not how to relent.

At last our Lord's firmness and His grace were to get the better of this irresponsiveness of theirs. The confession of Cæsarea is not far off. Enlightened by the Father in heaven, the chief of the Apostles will recognize in Jesus the Son of the Living God. Yet this supreme revelation would still be reticent about our Lord's humiliation and death, and it would need fresh efforts on His part, and above all, the graces of the Passion, to triumph over their last resistance to the faith.

'And they came to Bethsaida: and they bring to Him a blind man. And they besought Him that He would

touch Him. And taking the blind man by the hand, He led him out of the town. And spitting upon his eyes, laying His hands on him, He asked him if he saw any thing. And looking up, he said : I see men, as it were trees, walking. After that again He laid His hands upon his eyes : and he began to see and was restored, so that he saw all things clearly. And He sent him into his house, saying : Go into thy house, and if thou enter into the town, tell nobody.' (Mark viii, 22–26.)

Bethsaida, the Julias of Philip the tetrarch, was situated on the eastern shore of the lake : and it was there that Christ had gone after the feeding of the Five Thousand. He returned there now, still wishing to keep out of Herod's territory, and from thence He was soon to work back as far as Cæsarea Philippi.

The miracle here recorded is unique in the Gospels as an example of a progressive cure. In all other cases it was by a word or gesture that our Lord restored health to those who asked for it ; but in the present case, the favour is conferred by degrees. Victor, who has noticed this peculiarity, explains it by the imperfect faith of the blind man or of his friends ; our Lord, he thinks, was guided in the matter by the principle that He Himself laid down elsewhere : 'According to your faith be it done unto you.' And this seems probable. We are no longer on Jewish soil, and it it possible that the faith of those who thus had recourse to our Redeemer was very imperfect, and that of the blind man still more so. It was not he who made the request, and it was those around him who brought him to Christ, like those who, some time before, had brought to Him the paralytic at Capharnaum. Indeed it is quite possible that this poor man, knowing very little about our Lord, let his relations or friends do what they liked with him, without knowing that it was to Christ that he was about to be brought. It may well have been owing to these imperfect dispositions that our Lord anointed the blind man with saliva, as He had previously done in the case of the deaf man, too. As we have already remarked, Christ only employs this method twice in S. Mark's Gospel, and both times on pagan soil.

We can understand that our Lord, here falling in with the expectation of the sick man, began by adopting an expedient

in current use, while giving it a supernatural potency. So, surely, more than one Christian wonder-worker has concealed His miracles under the veil of prescriptions of an elementary kind. For the rest, the humanity of Christ possessed, in this instance, a life-giving virtue, through which Jesus cured the blind man, as He had already cured the deaf.

To work the miracle, our Lord took the man on one side, with the intention of making less prominent this manifestation of His power ; and this was also the reason for His direction : ' If thou enter the town tell nobody.' We may feel quite sure that our Lord was no better obeyed this time than on many similar occasions before. No doubt these indiscretions were foreseen by Him, while He did all that was possible to prevent them ; but He preferred to endure the handicap that they entailed, rather than deprive these poor people of the healing they implored.

This miracle, the last recorded in the Gospels before S. Peter's confession, was a symbol of what was taking place in the Apostles' minds. We can well believe that their eyes were being slowly and gradually opened to the true significance of these mysteries, which they had long witnessed without understanding them ; and their enlightenment was to be completed by this new manifestation of their Master's power.

IV. S. Peter's Confession.

This incident, recorded by all three Synoptics (Matt. xvi, 13–20 ; Mark viii, 27–30 ; Luke ix, 12–21), is just one of those which we can never weary of reading and commenting on again and again. For in it we find that our Lord, who had had so often to complain of His disciples' lack of understanding, can at last find in them an echo of the revelation of the Father ; at last, He finds Himself understood. And the Christian, in his turn, while re-reading S. Peter's confession, rejoices at this, the first appearance of definite Christian faith, followed immediately by the words in which Our Lord proclaims the foundation of the Church. It was truly a decisive day when, first among Christians, Peter acknowledges Christ, Son of the Living God, and on this rock which He is about to make impregnable, Christ promises to found His Church. Only one touch of sadness veils these glorious memories ; and that is that the event

took place on pagan soil, close to Cæsarea Philippi. So had begun the rejection of Christ in Galilee, driving Him to seek a shelter in Philip's territory,[1] in a Gentile land.

At the source of the Jordan a grotto had been consecrated to Pan; the surrounding territory, hence named Paneas, belonged to a certain Zenodorus, passing after his death, about 20 B.C., to Herod, by Augustus' gift. There, near the grotto, Herod built a fine temple to Augustus; while his son Philip founded a city there, called in honour of the emperor, Cæsarea. To distinguish it from other towns of the same name, and particularly from Cæsarea on the coast, this city was known as Cæsarea Philippi; it dated from the second or third year before Christ. It was a pagan town, frequented by Jews only on business; probably, like Tiberias, our Lord never visited it at all.

The landscape, which contrasted strongly with the bare aspect of Judea, is thus described by Le Camus: 'We arrive at the valley of the upper Jordan, climbing, without much noticing it, a series of small plateaux resting one upon another, to a height of some 1300 feet. Already at Tell-el-Kadi, the ancient Laïs, which became later the city of the sons of Dan, living streams begin to gurgle on every side; while, as we approach the source of the Jordan, the verdure becomes luxuriant, the atmosphere begins to cool, and groups of trees begin to appear. We forget the arid scenery of Palestine, and press forward joyously towards the great mountains, from which spring the rivers. We say to ourselves that it resembles a miniature Swiss landscape, pregnant with possibilities of pleasant rest, and indeed, after crossing numerous streams bubbling over the stones, we end by reaching thickets of fig-trees, willows, terebinths, oleanders, poplars, and almond-trees. Here is Baniyâs, the Paneas of old. Here the water, so rare throughout Palestine, runs freely in all the gardens, and even floods the little footpath, encumbered with ruins and stones of basalt, by which we came.'[2] This pleasant landscape is the home of a miserable population of seven or eight hundred inhabitants, who at night are compelled to leave their huts and crouch on the terraces, to escape from the attacks of scorpions and insects.

[1] On Cæsarea Philippi, cp. Schürer, II, 204–208; Lagrange, *L'Evangile de Jésus-Christ*, p. 247 and Plan xvii; Dalman, *Itinéraires*, pp. 268–274.
[2] Art. *Césarée de Philippe*, *Dict. de la Bible*, 452.

So it was on one of these green terraces, in the midst of these springs and orchards, that the Lord, stopping a moment on His way, put the decisive question to His disciples. According to S. Luke, He was praying apart when He was joined by them ; and this prayer, upon which Luke loves to insist, serves to emphasize the gravity of the day that was just beginning. Jesus prayed as He did before the choice of His Apostles, asking from His Father this revelation which should at least bring enlightenment to Peter's mind.

Then, as they walked, the conversation began. There was no touch of constraint, or stiffness, but all the freedom of familiar intercourse. ' Whom do men say that I am ? ' Jesus is not asking for the opinion of His enemies, but of the people at large. He knew that the Apostles, in mixing with them, had often heard opinions expressed which they did not dare put into words in the Master's presence. And so He now asks them what is the general opinion of Him. The question was less to elicit information for Himself, than to call the disciples' attention to the capital problem of His own identity. He is about to ask them what they themselves think ; but He did not begin with this, so that He might put them on their guard by force of the contrast between the popular blindness and their own growing faith. ' Why,' says S. Chrysostom (532), ' does He not ask them their opinion at once, instead of that of the multitude ? In order that, when they have reported the opinion of the crowd, and then have heard Christ asking : " But whom do you say that I am ? " they may be led by the very form of the question to a higher plane of thought, and not fall to the level of the rest.'

And then came a medley of replies. Some say John the Baptist ; others Elias ; others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. All the answers have one thing in common : Christ is a supernatural personage ; but beyond that all is uncertainty and confusion. Some commentators understand the idea to be that, in our Lord, the people recognized the spirit of John, or Elias, or Jeremias ; but this is not saying enough. ' Others say,' adds S. Luke, ' that one of the former prophets is risen again ' ; it is, then, likewise a resurrection which is referred to, when John, or Elias, or Jeremias are spoken of ; this, as we have already seen, was what Herod imagined. No doubt, it may seem strange that the

crowd could suppose that, in Jesus, John lived again, when they had seen both John and Jesus living as two contemporaries side by side. But this only shows that the figure of the Baptist had rapidly passed into the domain of legend. Scarcely had he vanished from the scene, than already he seems to reappear like the great prophets of old. Among these, the function of Elias is best known ; he is the Precursor of the Messias at the last day. Jeremias plays a more hidden part, but he, too, is one of the great protectors of Israel.

In the dream which he related to his followers, Judas saw Onias :

> 'After this, there appeared also another man admirable for age and glory and environed with great beauty and majesty. Then Onias answering, said : This is a lover of his brethren and of the people of Israel : this is he that prayeth much for the people and for all the holy city, Jeremias, the prophet of God. Whereupon Jeremias stretched forth his right hand and gave to Judas a sword of gold, saying : Take this holy sword, a gift from God, wherewith thou shalt overthrow the adversaries of my people Israel.' (2 Mach. xv, 13–16; cp. 4 Esdras ii, 17 ff.)

And so the people's faith wandered over all these personages of secondary importance, while they could not bring themselves to see in Jesus the Messias that He really was. And in view of this fact, so clearly attested by the three Synoptics, we can hardly help asking how we are to interpret the very explicit declarations previously related by the evangelists, and especially by S. John. So far, indeed, as John is concerned, the event at Cæsarea Philippi has been used as an argument for discrediting his testimony, but evidently such an argument will not bear the weight put upon it. B. Weiss (*Vie de Jésus*, II, 265) recalls the fact that, even in Mark, many previous incidents point to some revelation or recognition of the Messias. There is the action of the Precursor in pointing to Christ (i, 7), the calling of the Apostles (i, 16–20), the preaching of the kingdom (i, 14), the acknowledgement that a new teaching authority had arisen (i, 22), our Lord's own claim to be the Son of Man, and to have the right to forgive sins (ii, 10, 27), and the testimony of those possessed (i, 24, 34 ; iii, 11 ; v, 7). Is it credible that all this never once aroused in the people's minds

the thought that Jesus was the Messias? Further, the demand of a sign by the Pharisees bears witness to the existence of Messianic claims, contested no doubt by our Lord's opponents, but still known to them (viii, 11). Weiss concludes (267): 'We cannot understand what took place at Cæsarea in the sense that the people have never looked on Jesus as the Messias, and that the Apostles had only come to recognize Him as such for the first time, but in the sense that the people no longer held Him to be the Messias, while the Apostles persevered in their faith.' And it is to this conclusion that we are led by the history we have been tracing, and especially since the multiplication of the loaves. The people's enthusiasm, great though it had been, did not stand the test imposed upon it by our Lord's retirement to the mountain, and especially by the discourse on the Bread of Life; and the tragic episode at Capharnaum, as recorded by S. John, is the best introduction to the scene at Cæsarea. In the minds of most of our Lord's hearers, faith in Jesus as the Messias had been disturbed by the bitterness of illusions dispelled; yet these were powerless to hide from them the supernatural element in our Lord. So they sought the explanation in half-way solutions which could finally satisfy no reasonable man, but in which more than one could find rest for a time.

Over against these despondent and incoherent conjectures stands the Apostles' faith; and here, as at Capharnaum, it is Peter who expresses it in the name of all. S. John Chrysostom thus comments upon it (533):

'But whom do you say that I am? That is to say, you, who were always with Me and have been witnesses of My miracles; you have done many yourselves, by My power. What answer is given by Peter, the mouthpiece of the Apostles, he who is always effervescing with energy, he who is the leader of the apostolic choir? All are asked, but it is he who replies. When Jesus asks them for the opinion of the people, they all reply; when He asks what they think themselves, Peter, anticipating the rest, comes forward and says: Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God. What then does Christ answer? Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee. If his confession had not been true; if he had not recognized Him as born of the Father Himself, there would have been no revelation at all; if he thought that He was

only one son among many others, his confession would not have merited such praise. For, previously, after having seen the tempest stilled, those who had been in the boat had said : 'Truly Thou art the Son of God,' and Christ had not declared them blessed ; yet they had spoken the truth. The reason is, that they had not confessed the same kind of sonship as Peter ; they thought that He was truly son like many others, but still not of the same nature as the Father.'

This commentary makes very clear both S. Peter's function in the apostolic college and the excellence of his confession. As we have just said, the Apostles stand out from the crowd by the constancy of their faith. But there is more than this. The narrative as a whole, and especially our Lord's reply, forces us to recognize in S. Peter's confession a witness to a truth exceptionally holy and sublime, which only a Divine revelation could bring within their grasp. No doubt the first subject of the confession is the messianic dignity of our Lord : that emerges clearly from Mark's version : 'Thou art the Christ ;' and Luke's : 'The Christ of God ;' and even in S. Matthew we trace the same fact, in the charge immediately given by our Lord to His disciples. But this very Messiasship is here presented under a transcendent aspect : 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God.'[1]

And Christ replied :

> 'Blessed are thou, Simon Bar-Jona : because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee : That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.' (Matt. xvi, 17-19.)

[1] Cp. Sanday, art. *Son of God* (*D.B.*, IV, 572) : 'The context proves clearly that Matthew had before him some further tradition more explicit than Mark, possibly that of the Logia, but in any case a tradition that has the look of being original. Whether this originality extends to the whole phrase may be more than we could assert positively, but to the present writer it appears to be probable that it does. We should more easily understand the apostolic use of the title "Son of God" if there had been precedent for it on important occasions like this ,when it is represented as receiving the sanction of Christ Himself. The whole phrase as it stands, including the epithet "living God," calls up such a host of Old Testament associations, and at one step sets the confession so conspicuously in its place amid the whole series of biblical revelations, that we may be loth to leti t ſ o.'

Nowhere else does Jesus say to an individual : ' Blessed art thou,' and this exclamation is made more solemn still by the completeness of the mode of address used, giving Peter his original name, joined to that of his father : ' Simon Bar-Jona ' (cp. John xxi, 15–17). We may make bold to say that our Lord made His inquiries and put His question with some anxiety, and that Peter's immediate answer was to Him a consolation and a joy. The whole scene reminds us of a previous and, perhaps, more anxious questioning on our Lord's part : ' Will you also go away ? ' and the Apostle's reply : ' Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life.'

Then He went on : ' And I say to thee : that thou art Peter . . .' ' It is a reply truly Divine,' observes S. Chrysostom (534) ; ' only God could give the two privileges here conferred on Peter—that of forgiving sins, and of being the unshakable foundation of the Church. Of old, Jehovah had promised Jeremias that He would establish him as a fortified city and a wall of brass (i, 18) ; and yet he would only have to sustain the attacks of the Jews, while it is against a whole world that Peter would be strong.' And he adds : ' Who has given the greatest gift to Peter, the Father or the Son ? The Father has given the revelation of the Son : the Son has granted to him to spread abroad, through the whole earth, the knowledge of the Father and of Himself, and has entrusted to him, a mortal, all the treasures of heaven in the act of bestowing upon him the keys.'

Formerly Protestants were eager to contest the fact that the rock on which Jesus would build His Church was Peter himself ; but on this point, as on so many others, the old denials have little by little disappeared. Thus Plummer, quoting Briggs, writes : ' All attempts to explain the rock otherwise than as relating to Peter have ignominiously failed. Neither Peter's confession nor his faith are adequate identifications. But at the same time it is clear that the promise is made to Peter as confessing his faith, and also as confessing it in the name of the twelve ' (229). Reuss's explanation is as follows (397) : ' Simon Peter will be the rock on which Jesus wills to found His Church. A stone or rock serves already in the Old Testament as a symbol for the solidity of a moral fact ; while the allegory of the Church compared to a building is frequent in the New. Here we find these images combined in a very simple and natural

way ; and they are joined to a third. In the Hebrew poets the dwelling-place of the dead is represented as a place shut off by gates that resist all efforts to force them, and never do those who have once entered them escape. Thus they represent the power of death, of the devil, and of hell. Therefore the Church of Christ will be immovable and invincible because it is founded upon a rock.'

Our opponent's objections to-day are no longer those of the sixteenth-century Protestants ; they willingly concede the traditional application of our Lord's words, but contest their historical character. Catholic commentators have pursued the controversy over this ground.[1]

Batiffol insists on the form of the sentence. This is not word for word as spoken by Christ, or it would have more clearly preserved the tone of the Aramaic, which none the less betrays itself in every detail of expression : ' Simon Bar-Jona,' ' flesh and blood,' ' my Father who is in heaven,' and the play upon words on S. Peter's name : ' Jesus plays on the Aramaic name of Peter, but the " play " disappears in Greek, as in Latin as well ; sufficient proof that the original was in Aramaic, the mother-tongue of our Lord : Thou art Kepha, and upon this kepha I will build.' And we find the same original tone in the following expressions : the gates of hell, the keys of the kingdom, the power to bind and loose—all so many formulas borrowed by Christ from the language in current use in the circle in which He lived.[2]

As for the meaning of these promises, that would become plainer as time went on ; but it is already explicit enough. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Christ had compared the wise man to him who builds his house upon a rock ; it was thus that He Himself built, and the rock was

[1] Cp. L. Fonck, *Biblica*, 1920, pp. 260–63 ; P. Schepens, *Recherches de sc. rel.*, 1920, pp. 259–302 ; L. de Grandmaison, *Jésus-Christ*, II, pp. 63–65 ; Y. de la Brière, art. *Papauté*, *Dict. apol.* III, 1339–66 ; cp. Batiffol, *L'Eglise naissante*, 101 ff. : ' It is alleged against the authenticity of this text that it is missing from the parallel passages in Mark and Luke, and this cannot be denied. It is maintained, therefore, that it belongs neither to the tradition represented by Mark when Mark is reproduced by Matthew and by Luke, nor to those *logia* external to Mark which have been drawn upon by Matthew and Luke, and this is possible. But neither the one nor the other of these two observations is sufficient to justify the view that the isolated *logion* : " Thou art Peter," is less authentic than any other particular *logion* similarly isolated, whether in S. Matthew or S. Luke.'

[2] Cp. Billerbeck, 730–747 ; Levertoff-Goudge, *S. Matthew*, 167 ff.

Peter.[1] For the rest, this metaphor was familiar to the Jews :[2] 'Therefore thus saith the Lord God : Behold, I will lay a stone in the foundations of Sion, a tried stone, a corner stone, a precious stone, founded in the foundation.' (Is. xxviii, 16.) And later, S. Paul would take up the same idea to apply it once more to the Church : 'Built upon the foundations of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone' (Eph. ii, 20).

Against this structure, built by Divine hands, Satan will multiply his assaults. On the last day of His life, our Lord would say to Peter :

> 'Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not : and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren.' (Luke xxii, 31, 32.)

This indefectible faith of Peter would be for the entire structure the immovable pedestal against which Satan would break himself.

As for the keys, 'they stand for the major-domo's power. So Isaias represents Jehovah as saying to Eliacim : "And I will lay the key of the house of David upon his shoulder, and he shall open and none shall shut : and he shall shut and none shall open." Peter has supreme authority over the kingdom. He can receive Cornelius, just as he can deliver Ananias and Sapphira over to Satan. In short, Peter opens or closes the approach to the kingdom of heaven, of which he is the steward upon earth.'[3] Finally, the expression 'to bind and loose' was traditional with the rabbis, and used by them to express the legislative power which imposed, or dispensed from, certain duties ; and also the judicial power which decided the guilt or innocence of those who came before it. This twofold power was placed in Peter's hands ; later, it would be entrusted to the other Apostles likewise.

Immediately after the institution of this office, Christ enjoined His Apostles to say nothing about it to anyone. Many times already have we met these commands to secrecy ; and in this instance they are especially easy to understand. The reason why Jesus had come into a half-

[1] 'The Jewish parallels cited above seem to make it clear that the rock, on which the Church is to rise, is Peter himself, and not our Lord' (Levertoff-Goudge, p. 168). [2] Cp. Batiffol, 103. [3] *Ibid.*, 107.

pagan country, far from Galilee and its lake, was because it was necessary for Him to flee from the snares of His enemies. This threatening state of affairs throws into greater relief the solemn promises that we have just had under review. It was at this precise period, when our Lord had lost ground in Judea, that He promised Peter that He would raise upon him a structure that should know no end.

However, before the fulfilment of these promises could be reached, there was the terrible trial of the Passion to be undergone ; and now it was this that He set Himself to announce to the twelve. As is clearly noted by the evangelists, especially Matthew (xvi, 21) and Mark (viii, 31), it was at this time that our Lord definitely foretold His Passion to His disciples, having contented Himself previously with allusions, rare as they were obscure. But now He speaks clearly and in positive terms. The Apostles' faith, confessed by S. Peter in the name of all, was strong enough to bear the weight of these terrible predictions ; and, for the rest, Jesus did not as yet describe His torments in detail, as He did later on. So far, there is no hint of the scourging, or, above all, of the Cross. But what He does foretell is terrifying enough, with its story of organized persecution by all the leaders of the nation, issuing in excommunication and death. However, to revive the courage that these dreadful prospects might easily have dashed to the ground, He added at once : ' And the third day He shall rise again.' And so, from now onwards, we shall find our Blessed Lord always concerned to join the prediction of His triumph to that of His passion. Still, this glorious prophecy could not remove from the Apostles' minds the impression produced by the announcement of His death. And especially Peter, the most fervent of all, unable to endure the thought, and always impulsive, cried out in reply :

> ' Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee. Who turning, said to Peter : Go behind Me, Satan : thou art a scandal unto Me, because thou savourest not of the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.' (Matt. xvi, 22–23. Cp. Mark viii, 32–33.)

We may well ask how Peter could merit such reproaches, after the confession he had made and the promises he had received. The answer is, that these magnificent promises looked to the future. Later on, he will be the immovable

rock upon which the Church will be built ; but he is feeble now ;[1] and the revelation and promises have tended to exaggerate this weakness, and to call forth, face to face with the scandal of the Cross, so presumptuous a reply. And so we can understand all the better that this grand confession did not come from Peter himself, but as an inspiration from on high ; and now that there is no longer question of a revelation, we find only Peter, weak and blind.[2] Further, this scandalization of Peter shows the wisdom of our Blessed Lord's reserve, and of the silence that He imposed. If the Apostles and Peter himself understood our Lord's work and office so ill, how could they, without danger, explain to the people that Jesus was the Christ ? Apart from miraculous help from on high, they would have been blind leaders of the blind.

Our Lord's reply expresses emotion and indignation of the deepest kind. ' Words like that come from the depths of the soul. They are far removed from the calm announcement of a line of conduct, or the didactic formula of a lesson. Such things are by nature cold, and words like these are not cold. Rather—if we may speak of Christ as we would of one of ourselves—they were spoken with heat. For, really, we have here a reaction against a temptation, felt, and vividly, as such. Our Lord goes so far as to identify Peter with the Tempter himself. The Apostle had spoken in the innocence of his heart ; without reflection, but with the vehemence of a short-sighted affection ; yet without evil intention of any kind. But in his ill-considered words there lay hidden a poisoned dart, a dart aimed directly at the very purpose of Christ's mission upon earth.'[3]

Out of respect to his Master, Peter had taken Him aside to make his remonstrance ; but Christ, as S. Mark tells us, returned to give His reply before the whole band. Further,

[1] S. Jerome, p. 120.

[2] S. Chrysostom (535–536), whose words these are, further observes that this scandalization of Peter is the best justification for the silence imposed on the Apostles : ' If those who had rejoiced in so many miracles, who had shared in ineffable mysteries, were scandalized by the mere announcement of the Passion, and not only they, but their leader, Peter, too ; only think what would have been the impression on the crowd, if they had been told that this was the Son of God, and then seen Him crucified and spat upon. . . . For if He could say to His Apostles : " I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now " ; how much more would the rest of the people have been overwhelmed, if this highest of all mysteries had been revealed to them before the appropriate time ? '

[3] Sanday, *J.T.S.*, 1904, 327.

He wished to take advantage of the incident to show, not only to the Apostles, but to all the people, what it cost to follow Him :

> ' And calling the multitude together with His disciples, He said to them : If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it : and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul ? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? For he that shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, in this adulterous and sinful generation : the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him, when he shall come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. And He said to them : Amen, I say to you that there are some of them that stand here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God coming in power.' (Mark viii, 34–39. Cp. Matt. xvi, 24–28 ; Luke ix. 23–27.)

Even in these remote regions, our Lord's renown had attracted to Him other witnesses than the twelve. To these, who formed only a passing audience, Christ did not unveil Himself, such self-revelation being still reserved for His Apostles alone. But to all He made known the conditions that His service required. So He called to Him, not only the twelve, before whom He had just given Peter His rebuke, but the whole crowd, and then spoke the severe words that the Synoptics have recorded in almost identical terms.

To-day these words of our Lord arouse memories of His Passion in every Christian mind ; we see Him, above all, the first example of this painful theory of life, as He goes forward carrying His Cross. Still, at the date we have now reached, Jesus had not yet foretold His crucifixion, even to His Apostles ; all the more, therefore, would it be unsuspected by the people as a whole. But everyone knew the meaning of the punishment of the cross. The Romans had taught it to the Jews. In order to tame the revolt that broke out after Herod's death, Varus had had crucified no less than two thousand men. These executions were renewed under Quadratus and Florus, while, later on, at the time of the great rising, the Romans set up so many crosses that

there was a scarcity of wood.[1] In Judea, and still more in Galilee, everyone knew what it meant to carry the cross, and when Jesus told His disciples to take up their cross, they saw in imagination those lamentable groups of condemned persons of whom many, perhaps, had been their neighbours or friends. Later, for Christians, there would be added to these memories that of the Great Crucified One, who would make them forget all the others, and whose Cross would change into glory the shame and torment of all the crucified.

The self-denial which Jesus demands here from His disciples is thus explained by S. John Chrysostom (542): To understand Him, let us consider what the abandonment of a neighbour means. It is: to care naught whether he be beaten, put in chains, or suffer any other evil. We must act thus in regard to ourselves; we must have no feeling for ourselves, but must surrender ourselves to dangers and conflicts with as much indifference as though someone else were concerned. Christian asceticism normally represents self-denial in a more active fashion as a struggle against self; but the sense here indicated seems clearly the direct meaning of the expression, and thus is it developed by Christ in the verses which follow.

These prospects of total self-abnegation and of eternal life are lighted up for us by the life and example of Christ. It is He whom we must follow in carrying His Cross; He whom we must confess, even to the point of death, before the ungodly; it is for Him that we must 'lose' our lives; and then we are sure of finding them, because the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with the holy angels, and will render to each according to his works. The whole programme of the Christian life, with its demands and promises, lies there; imposed on no one, but offered by

[1] On Varus see A.J., XVII, 10, 10, 295. This war left peculiarly terrible memories in Galilee. Sepphoris had been given to the flames and its inhabitants sold as slaves: cp. B.J., II, 5, 1–3, 66–78. On Quadratus, see B.J., II, 12, 6, 241; on Florus, B.J., II, 14, 9, 301: 'Florus was the first to dare to scourge and crucify men of equestrian rank.' On the executions during the great war see B.J., V, 11, 1, 451: 'The number (of crucifixions) was so great that no more room could be found for setting-up the crosses, nor crosses for the bodies of those to be crucified.' These facts are mentioned by Lagrange, *S. Marc*, p. 221.

It cannot therefore be said with Loisy (I, 895) that these words of Christ 'had no meaning except in relation to His Passion and for those who knew the circumstances of His death,' and that, therefore, they are of no historical value.

Christ to all : ' If any man will . . .' It is for each one to decide if he is willing to pay the price, and the price is himself, whole and entire ; but let him note well that if he refuse, if he would hold back, he loses himself, once and for all. The supreme honour that any man can give to Christ is thus to offer Him the fealty of his soul ; an honour which Christ Himself will recognize at the Last Day, when He will return in His glory, surrounded by His angels, and will acknowledge for His own those who have had faith in Him.

It is only in that day that Christ will render to each man life or death according to His works. It may seem a long time to this day of reckoning ; but soon some of those who heard our Lord would be able to collect an earnest of future payment : ' there are some of them that stand here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God coming into power.' These words immediately precede the narrative of the Transfiguration, a hint followed generally by the Fathers in interpreting the passage. On the other hand, most modern scholars think that we have here rather a prediction of the expansion of the Church. The two views are not irreconcilable : ' Christ calls the Transfiguration His Kingdom, not because it is so, properly speaking, but because it is to be taken as its type and image.'[1] Indeed, this glorious manifestation will appear to us as the first-fruits, or rather the harbinger, of the reign of Christ. The Heavenly Father, who inspired Peter's confession, would confirm it by His solemn witness ; and the glory with which He would surround His Son would give the Apostles a guarantee of the happiness of which they had been assured.

V. The Transfiguration.

' And after six days, Jesus taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves.' (Mark ix, 2.)

In its very first words, the narrative is remarkable for the chronological data that it supplies. The Synoptics were not accustomed to date the facts that they record ; but here, all three have taken care to mark the interval of time which separates the scene at Cæsarea Philippi from the Transfiguration. Nor is this merely a matter of chance, for the two events are closely related to each other. At Cæsarea,

[1] Maldonatus.

Peter received and made profession of the Divine revelation of the Son of God ; while, on the mountain, the Father Himself, making Himself heard from out of the cloud, confirmed the testimony of the Apostle. At Cæsarea, Christ foretold to His Apostles His approaching Passion and the trials that they themselves would have to sustain ; here, Almighty God wills to manifest His glory to restore their courage, and to glorify in advance Him who is treading onward to His death.

S. Luke mentions that our Lord had gone up into the mountain to pray, just as the same evangelist shows us our Lord in prayer before Cæsarea Philippi, and on the eves of other decisive moments of His ministry. To-day He is about to ask for His Apostles and for Himself the support that His Father is about to give Him in so solemn a way. It was in the evening that He withdrew into the mountain, for we see Him descending again in the morning (Luke ix, 37) ; this also explains the sleep that weighed so heavily upon the Apostles. The scene of the Transfiguration is more difficult to determine ; for centuries it has been located at Thabor, that solitary mountain that from a height of nearly a thousand feet towers over every part of the plain, presenting an ideal setting for this manifestation of Divine glory—solitude for prayer, and a view of all Galilee from sea to lake.[1] Many modern writers, however, prefer Hermon, near Cæsarea Philippi, and offering prospects more majestic even than Thabor. From there can be seen not only Galilee, but both domains, Jewish and Pagan, divided from each other by this high mountain chain, the three highest peaks being nearly ten thousand feet high. Still, heights like these do not strike us as the most probable setting for an event like the Transfiguration, involving as they do a climb of some six hours and a descent of four ; we should be inclined to search for some other spot in the chain, where solitude would be more easily reached. But, once more, we can here only form conjectures, which do not affect the mystery itself.

[1] This magnificent panorama has been described many times, by Didon, for example. Lagrange (*S. Marc*, p. 233) speaks of ' its situation as an isolated mountain—a perfect belvedere, in fact. There to-day we can enjoy true solitude, without being embarrassed by the presence of a fortress that occupied the whole summit in Josephus' time (B.J., IV, 1, 8). . . . But it is certain that the evangelists attached less importance to the name of the place than to its quality as a high mountain, forming a parallel with Sinai. The event took place in extreme privacy, and possibly the three themselves never knew the exact scene of its occurrence.'

'Our Lord,' we read, 'took Peter and James and John, and went up into the mountain to pray. And whilst He prayed the shape of His countenance was altered . . .' (Luke ix, 28–29). Often when saints have been in ecstasy their faces have appeared as if lighted up, in short, 'altered,' as S. Luke says about Christ; but the prayer and ecstasy of the saints are nothing beside the prayer of Christ. It is not surprising that a heavenly light should have transfigured Him to an extent unapproached in the case of any saint. His face shone like the sun, and His very clothes became of a dazzling whiteness, 'white,' naïvely remarks S. Mark, 'as no fuller upon earth can make white.' And beside Jesus stood Moses and Elias, in converse with Him.

It would seem that the beginning of this heavenly manifestation escaped the Apostles, who, S. Luke tells us, were weighed down by sleep. We find them, Christ's three privileged witnesses, as we shall find them later at the Agony, with spirits willing but flesh weak. Prevented by the torpor that overwhelms them from uniting themselves with their Master's prayer, they are conscious only of the closing incidents of this amazing scene.[1] Emerging from sleep, they see Christ transfigured, and two men conversing with Him. And they recognize them as Moses and Elias.[2]

The evangelists have made no attempt to describe the feelings of the Apostles, nor will we do so. Let us think only of their enthusiastic love for their Master. They were broken-hearted at the announcement of His Passion and cut to the heart at the ruin of their naïvely ambitious dreams: yet such dreams were nothing in the presence of glory like this. Nor was Jesus alone: the whole of Judaism was enshrined in the persons of Moses and Elias, representing the law and the prophets. Many a time the Apostles had heard their Master reproached with breaking the law and overturning the traditions of Judaism. No doubt they knew Him well enough to be able to overcome the effect of this opposition in their own minds; yet surely they had

[1] The term employed by Luke, *διαγρηγορήσαντες*, is late Greek and rarely used. In the passages where it is found it means 'to keep awake,' or sometimes, 'to awake.' Cp. Bauer, s.v.

[2] 'How did they know them?' asks the critics. Plummer (*Luke*, 251) replies: 'The power to recognize them was granted with the power to see them; otherwise the sight would have been meaningless. In the same way S. Paul recognized Ananias in a vision, although he had not previously known him' (Acts ix, 12).

been troubled by it at times? After all, it was rash of them to believe in Him. His calumniators were the revered masters of Judaism, sitting in Moses' seat, and from their youth they had learnt to respect and follow them. This conflict between the past and the present was raging around them, and, in the very heart of the family circle, as our Lord had foretold, was setting daughter against mother, and father against son (Matt. x, 35). Surely it was tearing their own hearts asunder, too. And now this apparition calmed all that, making them find in the Master, whom they were learning to adore, the realization of everything they had reverenced from childhood itself. Moved by such sentiments, Peter felt that he must say something, make an offer of service of some sort: his expansive and eager nature could contain itself no longer; and so he spoke, but he had no idea what to say, and, with exquisite simplicity, the Gospel has preserved for us the story of his simple zeal.

> 'And Peter answering, said to Jesus: Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. And let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. For he knew not what he said: for they were struck with fear.' (Mark ix, 4, 5.)

If we try ourselves to understand the significance of this event, we realize at once that the transfiguration properly speaking, that is, our Lord's physical transformation in face and raiment, has nothing in it that need perplex, or even surprise us. We believe that our Redeemer's humanity, whole and entire, body and soul, is substantially united to the Divinity; surely we have no need to be astonished that it should appear imbued and penetrated with Divine glory? From the discourse on the Bread of Life, we learn of the life-giving qualities of Christ's Flesh, which was many times manifested by miracles besides; the apparition on the mount was only the sensible expression of the fact that Christ's body was wholly impregnated with Divine power, and this was already a matter of belief. All this may appear surprising, because it is exceptional, since usually our Blessed Lord kept such manifestations under restraint; but, what really *is* surprising, is the obscurity under which He habitually hid Himself. It is well worthy of remark that, with Christ, this manifestation only occurred in close connection with prayer, as if He wished to show us that all this

glory, which was natural to Him, derived from Him who was the only source of His life and blessedness, the Heavenly Father with whom His converse in prayer took place.

Nor need the appearance of Moses and Elias surprise us any the more. 'God,' our Lord would say later, 'is not the God of the dead but the living,' and 'all live to Him.' And the same is true of Christ Himself: to Him, too, all live. All the Old Testament saints, patriarchs and prophets, have not through death fallen into nothingness; on the contrary, they live and attend upon Him, whose coming they had foretold. And so Christ willed to speak face to face with Moses, and in Elias' presence, in order to accomplish at this late date the promise made of old.[1]

In the vision of Judas Machabeus, to which we have already referred, Jeremias appeared as 'he that prayeth much for the people and for the holy city' (2 Mach. xv, 14); and we may say the same with still greater truth of Moses and Elias, in whom all Judaism lies incarnate. Their appearance on the mountain at Christ's side could not but reveal to the Apostles' eyes that work of intercession and ministry, which prolonged the work that Precursor and prophets had discharged on earth. We may here recall the visions of Joan of Arc, in which her heavenly protectors, from her youth onwards, revealed to her the part she was to play, and, later on, foretold her death. No doubt Christ's relations with these holy persons were of an entirely different kind; He needed neither revelation nor support; but there remains at least one common feature, namely, the part played by the saints in the decisive events of their people's history together with the Messias' appearance and death. For it was of this that they conversed. 'And they spoke of His decease that He should accomplish in Jerusalem.'

We shall find this very term 'decease' (departure) used later by S. Peter (II, i, 15) in the epistle in which he recalls the Transfiguration of our Lord. '. . . I will endeavour that you frequently have after my decease whereby you may keep a memory of these things.' And conversely, in his discourse at Antioch in Pisidia, Paul refers to our Lord's entry into the world as His 'coming' (Acts xiii, 24). Both expressions very clearly convey the fact that our Blessed Lord's life on earth was only a phase of an existence which

[1] S. Irenæus, *Adv. Hæres.*, IV, 20, 9; P.G., VII, 1038. Cp. *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, II, p. 597.

did not begin and would not end here. In short, it was this conversation on the Passion that lent all its meaning to the Transfiguration, as S. Leo says (*Serm.* 44, P.L., LIV, 310) : ' the chief end of the Transfiguration was to remove from the Apostles' minds the scandal of the Cross.' This was the natural effect of the glorious manifestation itself, and still more of that wonderful conversation in which the Fathers of Judaism spoke of those terrible events that yet would be for the salvation of Israel and of the whole world.

None the less, a more sacred testimony yet was to be given to the Son of God. Coming from the luminous cloud that overshadowed them were heard the words : ' This is My Beloved Son : hear Him.' Peter, in his naïve enthusiasm had wished to raise three tabernacles ; but of these, Christ in His glory has no need ; for Him the luminous cloud is a sufficient covering. It was in a cloud that God had appeared on Sinai, it was a cloud that guided Israel in the desert. It was a cloud, again, to which Wisdom was compared. All these memories must have been present to the Apostles' minds, and, as is noted by S. Luke, ' they were afraid when they entered into the cloud.' It was the same fear of contact with the supernatural that had seized upon Peter in the boat, but more vividly now, before heavenly manifestations more mysterious still.

The Divine Voice made itself heard as at the Baptism, and once again the Father bestowed the seal of His sovereign testimony on His Son, at the same time strengthening the Apostles' faith in Him. And this fresh testimony should have been better understood than the former, since its hearers were better prepared to comprehend and obey.

The Apostles' fear had increased, and they fell prostrate on the ground ; but Christ came and touched them, raising them to their feet, and when they looked about them, there was no one there but Himself. Gone was the heavenly voice, the cloud of light, sensible manifestations which could last only for a time. The disciples must begin again their life of faith, but under the Master's guidance. Moses and Elias were gone, too ; Judaism was passing ; Christ and His faith remained for ever.

Towards the end of the Apostolic age, the Transfiguration is recalled in the Second Epistle of S. Peter :

> ' For we have not by following artificial fables made known to you the power and presence of our Lord

Jesus Christ: but we were eye-witnesses of His greatness. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, this voice coming down to Him from the excellent glory: This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him. And this voice, we heard brought from heaven, when we were with Him in the holy mount. And we have the more firm prophetical word: whereunto you do well to attend, as to a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts.' (2 Peter i, 16–19.)

These words make very clear what it was that the Transfiguration had done for the Apostles. It was a fresh guarantee to them of that coming for which they looked. Christ would come in power—this they believed on the prophet's words, but that testimony was confirmed still more by this glory that they had beheld. It meant a new brilliance added to the steady light that shines in the dark night of this world of ours. But the Apostles' words stress also the privileged part that He was permitted to play. Borrowing the language of the mysteries, he represents his companions and himself as eye-witnesses, or privileged initiates, who had contemplated this glory of which he speaks. For that was indeed the part that these three Apostles were destined to play; privileged witnesses of the most glorious manifestation of the whole Gospel, they could rightly rest their faith on its memory, and then enrich that of their followers too. But it would only be later on, after the Resurrection, that they might tell others what they had seen and heard.

'And as they came down from the mountain, He charged them not to tell any man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man shall be risen again from the dead.' (Mark ix, 8.)

We have no difficulty in understanding our Lord's command. A manifestation so clearly supernatural would have roused the popular enthusiasm in the most dangerous way. After an apotheosis like this, the Passion and Cross would have been a scandal impossible to bear. But when once this terrible crisis had been passed, the story of the Transfiguration would serve as a confirmation of faith. It is a remarkable fact that, on their own statement, the Apostles

had observed the silence thus imposed upon them by the Lord; it is one of those facts that show in the clearest light their own docility, and the Master's influence upon them.

Still, there was one point in our Lord's charge by which they were much mystified, namely, what the Resurrection of which He spoke could mean. No doubt, like all Jews of the period, they knew what was meant by the resurrection of the dead. What they could not understand was that Christ should be included in it, or that He should die at all; and yet they had just been hearing Him in conversation with Moses and Elias on the very subject of the end that He was to accomplish at Jerusalem; and, in spite of this quite recent experience, they could not yet understand, so new and revolting to them was the prospect of our Lord's death.

Yet they dare not question Him on the point. No doubt they all had in mind the Master's severe reply to Peter at Cæsarea Philippi, only eight days before; and all protest, they knew well, would be severely rebuffed. Nor did they dare ask for more light; what they had was terrifying enough. So they contented themselves with asking questions about the part to be played by Elias, which, apart from anything else, would help to clear up the rôle of the Messias Himself. They had just beheld the glorious manifestation of Christ; Elias had been there too, but as a simple witness without playing the active part assigned to him by tradition. 'Elias,' said Tryphon, as he is reported in Justin's dialogues (49), 'should anoint the Christ; how then could the fact be explained that the Messias had already appeared in glory without Elias having done anything at all?'[1]

Our Lord, in reply, made it clear to them that Elias had already come, in the person of John the Baptist; but He seized the opportunity of insisting anew on the fate He had already foretold for the Son of Man, that 'he must suffer many things and be despised.' In the concise form in which it is given by S. Mark, this reply of our Lord seems to present itself as an objection, or a new difficulty, brought forward in reply to that raised by the Apostles themselves. Elias was to restore all things, and yet the Son of Man who

[1] On the messianic rôle of Elias in the rabbinic tradition, cp. Billerbeck, IV, pp. 779–798.

came after him must suffer ; so that, after all, the accomplishment of Elias' work would not herald the coming of an era of justice upon earth. And, in fact, the Precursor had come, and, true to prophecy, had brought low the mountains and made plain the rough ways, and yet when the Christ came in His turn, He was done to death in those self-same paths. So the Precursor's action would have been an impassioned effort, initiating a movement both strong and deep, preparing the first Apostles to hear the Redeemer's call, and ending in the supreme sacrifice made in the dungeons of Macheron. But this was not the establishment of that earthly paradise of which the Jews dreamed ; and the Messias, instead of passing as victor through a world already pacified and subdued, had to make His way in pain and sorrow in the midst of foes aflame with hatred ; in the end, to meet the fate of the Precursor Himself. As they had misunderstood the Baptist and ill-treated him at will, so would they do to the Son of Man.[1]

Jesus and the three disciples having passed the night on the mountain, descended the next day to the plain below, only to find themselves in the midst of a confused and agitated crowd. A man was about to bring to our Lord his son, both a demoniac and epileptic ; the disciples, in spite of strenuous efforts, had not been able to restore him to sanity and health. The scribes had taken advantage of their failure to open a discussion with them, and it was in the midst of their embarrassment and conflict that the poor disciples were found by Jesus and the privileged three, fresh from the heavenly cloud.[2] We are reminded of Moses, coming down from the mountain and finding the idolatrous people prostrate before the Golden Calf (Exodus xxxii, 15–20).[3] The crowd were 'astonished and struck with fear' when they saw our Lord, whose return they had not expected so soon, and whose presence served to increase the emotions excited by the discussions that had arisen during

[1] On the historical value of the story of the Transfiguration, see L. de Grandmaison, *Jésus-Christ*, II, pp. 66, 68 ; cp. Ed. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge*, I, pp. 152–57 ; B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, p. 546.

[2] Mark ix, 14–29 ; Matt. xvii, 14–21 ; Luke ix, 37–43.

[3] Loisy (49) pushes the comparison further: 'The people's dread corresponds with that felt by the ancients of Israel when they saw Moses' face shining as he came down from the mount.' The attempted parallel is poor enough, especially when we remember that our Lord, having requested silence about the Transfiguration, would certainly not have preserved any trace of it Himself.

His absence.[1] No sooner did Jesus appear than the father rushed up to Him, thus showing that he had not given up all hope; what the disciples could not achieve, the Master still might do; but the hope was weak enough! So this was what our Lord met on His descent from the Mount—the people's doubts, the disciples' timid faith, the obstinate opposition of the scribes; and He could not keep back a lament; 'O, incredulous generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?' (Mark ix, 19). All through His life He had suffered from this unbelief—to Him, the most grievous of all sins; but He would not have to endure it much longer. Probably very few of those present understood this anguished warning of His. Then He gave the command: 'Bring him to Me'; and no sooner was the order obeyed, than the child had an attack then and there before Him. In answer to His questions, the father relates once more the terrible and inveterate nature of the disease, adding, beseechingly, but hardly believingly: 'If Thou canst do anything, help us, having compassion on us.' And our Lord at once took him up. 'If thou canst? But all things are possible to him that believeth.' And then the poor man, realizing that his son's restoration to health depended upon his own wavering faith, cried out: 'I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief.' In all the Gospel there is no more touching prayer than this, and none that shows up more clearly the incurable weakness of man. Left to himself, he has not the strength to believe; but Christ can help, and His action on the soul is something more wonderful and adorable than the mere cure of a paralytic could ever be. Then our Lord spoke the authoritative word: 'Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee go out of him,' and the evil spirit obeyed, after 'tearing' the unfortunate boy in one last paroxysm. And at once our Lord told His disciples (Mark ix, 29) that this kind of demon only yielded to prayer; although, in His supreme authority, a word from Him was enough.[2]

[1] The gathering of a crowd like this, and especially the presence of the scribes, is more easily understood in Galilee than in Cæsarea, although not impossible there.

[2] 'Why could we not cast him out?' Jesus said to them: 'Because of your unbelief. For, amen, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain: Remove from hence hither, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you' (Matt. xvii, 18–19).

On this Reuss comments: 'No obstacles can resist the power of the

VI. Jesus among His disciples.

While the crowd were still agape at the wonder they had just witnessed, our Lord detached Himself from them, wishing to cross Galilee without being known ; and, as He went, He continued the instruction of His disciples.

> ' The Son of Man[1] shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him : and after that He is killed, He shall rise again the third day. But they understood not the word ; and they were afraid to ask Him.' (Mark ix, 30, 31. Cp. Matt. xvii, 22, 23 ; Luke ix, 43–45.)

Twice before, Christ had foretold His Passion to His Apostles, namely, after Peter's confession, and after the Transfiguration. On the first occasion, Peter had attempted to protest, and had been severely rebuked ; while on the second, the Apostles had tried to clear up the terrible mystery by timid questioning about Elias and his rôle. This time they kept silence, not daring to question Him further ; perhaps afraid to know too much. For the rest, they did not yet understand the mystery that was frightening them, and S. Luke (ix, 45) even seems to hint that it was hidden from them by a providential design ; perhaps they had not the

will's energy when it is the effort of a strong conviction, of the immediate and intuitive certainty of the conformity of the end with that of God Himself. The stronger the resistance of the obstacle, the greater the faith required. There are evil spirits who yield only to heroic efforts, when the man, shaking himself free from all the fetters that hold him captive in the sphere of earthly affairs (fasting), seeks in God alone (prayer) both the end of all his aspirations and the source of all his strength ' (415). We have here a manifest departure from the sense of our Lord's words : He does not ask of us ' a great energy of will ' but a great faith, leading to a great confidence in God our Father. If we trust in Him and at the same time implore His help by fasting and prayer, we can count on His fatherly goodness and His divine omnipotence. The hyperbolical expression used by Christ was traditional in Judaism ; and Job speaks in a similar way of Almighty God ' removing mountains ' (ix, 5) to show that nothing is impossible to Him. And again in Isaias (liv, 10), we read : ' For the mountains shall be moved and the hills shall tremble : but my mercy shall not depart from thee, and the covenant of My peace shall not be moved.'

[1] ' The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men.' The reference here is not, it would seem, to Judas' treachery, but rather to the Father's abandonment of His Son to men's tender mercies, resulting in their doing as they would with Him, as they did with John the Baptist not long before. We may recall here David's response to the prophet Gad : ' I am in a great strait ; but it is better I should fall into the hands of the Lord (for His mercies are many) than into the hands of men ' (2 Kings xxiv, 14). As Lagrange, in recalling this passage says, ' to fall into the hands of men is a terrible threat, since they know not how to forgive.'

strength to know the truth. Still, our Lord's words, mysterious and terrible as they were, were graven in their hearts, and on the day of their great trial they would be a source of light and strength.

Thirty years later, S. Paul would go up to Jerusalem to suffer in his turn, and, at each step of the journey, prophetic warnings would half-disclose what God had in store for His servant there. Now he was enlightened directly by the Holy Ghost (Acts xx, 23), now by the ministry of Christian prophets (ib. xxi, 4, 11); yet always such warnings were half-veiled (ib. xx, 23). But Jesus contemplated His Passion from the very beginning with perfect clearness, and disclosed it to His disciples little by little as time went on.

When the little band reached Capharnaum, the tax-collector came to ask Peter whether our Lord paid the customary impost or not:

> 'Doth not your Master pay the didrachmas? He said: Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying: What is thy opinion, Simon? The kings of the earth, of whom do they receive tribute or custom? Of their own children, or of strangers? And he said: Of strangers. Jesus said to him: Then the children are free. But that we may not scandalize them, go to the sea and cast in a hook: and that fish which shall first come up, take: and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shall find a stater: take that and give it to them for Me and thee.' (Matt. xvii, 23–26.)

Already in Exodus (xxx, 13) we find it laid down that every Israelite should pay half a sicle every year. This, in the time of Christ, was the equivalent of two drachmas, destined for the upkeep of the Temple, and collected in Palestine in the fifteen days preceding the Passover. In the neighbouring countries it was collected before Pentecost, and further afield before the Feast of Tabernacles.[1] Probably, at the very time of collection, Jesus was at Capharnaum in Philip's territory, and as there was a halt there, the collectors came with their demands.

So far, all is plain sailing, but many commentators have been perplexed at the miracle involved, even those who do not *a priori* reject the idea of the supernatural altogether;[2]

[1] Billerbeck, I, p. 766 ff.

[2] Farrar, *The Life of Christ*, II, 46, admits that he is perplexed; as also Bruce, in *The Miraculous Element in the Gospels*, p. 235. While Plummer

they do not notice in it the religious character which is distinctive of the Gospel miracles ; and yet this religious note is sufficiently obvious. Kings did not exact taxes from their children : in furtherance of this idea, certain doctors wanted to know if the priests were liable for the Temple impost ; from such a tax, then, the Son of God was exempt, as even those who by grace had become children of God (Matt. v, 9). Still, Jesus submitted to the law, which was not made for Him, providing by a miracle what was needed for the purpose, and in this way teaching Peter both His own dominion over nature, and His spirit of humble obedience to the law. Almost immediately afterwards, the Apostles will be disputing as to who has the first place, and Christ will preach to them humility, and the importance of taking care to avoid scandal. All these lessons are already implied in the incident before us, where the sovereign Lord of all condescends to pay the tax, so that scandal may be given to none. We can trace here the rule of conduct that He always imposed on Himself, as at His Baptism, and with which He inspired others, like our Lady herself, at the Purification. Once more, we see our Lord here associating His Apostle with Himself, and showing by the same miracle how close the bond between Peter and Himself was henceforth to be.

This question settled, the party went into the house, and our Lord, taking advantage of a discussion that had arisen among His disciples on the road, gave them a very serious instruction indeed (Mark ix, 33–37 ; Matt. xviii, 1–5 ; Luke ix, 46–48). The whole incident is one of those which best help us to understand the method of teaching followed by Christ. He and the twelve were making their way to Capharnaum. The expression (*συστρεφομένων*) used by Matthew (xvii, 22) seems to imply that they made the journey in small groups, our Lord having fixed Capharnaum as the meeting-place, where, in fact, they did join forces once more. On the way, Jesus, attaching Himself first to one group and then to another, was able to converse

(p. 247) observes that the Gospel does not relate the accomplishment of our Lord's prediction ; a pointless observation, for it is clear from S. Matthew's narrative that things fell out as our Lord had foretold. The older rationalists imagined that Christ sent Peter to fish and that the first fish caught was sold for a stater ; a feeble suggestion, that Reuss thought it worth while to demolish (*Hist. Evangélique*, pp. 417, 418). Nor need we attach any greater importance to the supposed parallel with Polycrates' ring ! Bultmann, *Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, Göttingen, 1921, p. 145.

familiarly with each of His disciples and to train them by no other method than that of a daily contact, inspiring confidence and without restraint. At times He would draw aside a little, leaving them to pursue their way alone, and it was on one of these occasions that the little group that He happened to be with at the moment set itself to discuss the question of precedence. The recent event of the Transfiguration, or of the incident at Cæsarea Philippi, might well have provoked the discussion. It was being more and more felt that there were inequalities, even in the heart of the Apostolic band itself. Peter held a place in which he had no peer, and had received promises from Christ, the fulfilment of which could be shared by no one else ; while on the Mountain He had been alone with James and John. This, then, was a privileged group. Jealousy was being aroused by these favours, and a discussion sprang up. Our Lord had only just foretold His Passion once again, but they had no thoughts for it ; it was the *kingdom* on which their minds ran, and they were disputing about its prizes in advance.

But the Apostles knew well enough that such discussions were condemned by the Lord, so they took advantage of the fact that He was a little distance off to discuss the burning question among themselves. He was not with them, but He had followed their conversation all the same, and when they reached Capharnaum He asked them : 'What did you treat of in the way?' Like schoolboys caught in a fault, they did not dare to reply ; as S. Mark says : 'They held their peace, for in the way they had disputed among themselves, which of them should be the greatest.' And then our Lord, in order the better to gain their attention, sat down like a master who had an important lesson to give, and taught them the great principle that governs all ranks and precedence, from the Christian point of view : the principle of *service*, according to which whoever is the greatest should be the last, and the servant of all. It was one of the last lessons that He would give at the Supper, when having washed the Apostles' feet like a servant, He would ask them : 'Know what I have done to you?' (John xiii, 12). And on the present occasion, too, to make His thought more concrete and more appealing, He joined action to words ; drawing a child to himself and embracing it, He told them : '. . . unless you be converted and become as little children,

you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, whoso therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven.'[1]

It may be remembered how S. Augustine, recalling his childhood's memories, was led to interpret this passage. After recalling his boyish sins—small thefts, greediness—he goes on: Have we here the innocence of the child? No, Lord; O, my God, a thousand times no! For these are the same sins that are punished first by tutors and schoolmasters, mischievous pranks concerned with nuts, balls, and small birds; which later lead the offender before magistrates and kings, in matters of gold, land, and slaves. The sins of childhood change as we get older, in the same way that more severe punishments replace the ferule. So, O Christ our King, it is only the small stature of children that Thou didst praise in their presence as a symbol of humility, when Thou didst say: 'for the kingdom of heaven is for such' (*Conf.*, I, 19).

It is not surprising to find this severe passage in Augustine, always concerned to trace, even in the tenderest age, the taint of concupiscence and original sin. Our Lord's thought here is, however, better expressed by Chrysostom, although, perhaps, he puts too much optimism into his description of the virtues of childhood:

'The child is free from all jealousy and vanity, and the

[1] Ancient Christian tradition, which loved to group around the central figure of our Lord the personages it had known in the flesh, imagined that the child in this story was S. Ignatius, the future bishop of Antioch; but the only ground for the tradition is the name 'theophoros' which may be translated 'borne by Christ;' and this is evidently not enough. Present-day scholars suppose that it may have been a child of Peter that was playing in the house. Probably it *was* Peter's house that Jesus used as a *pied-à-terre* at Capharnaum; and we know that Peter was married, for, early in His ministry Jesus had cured his mother-in-law (Mark i, 30); and Clement of Alexandria and S. Jerome both speak of his children (*Strom.*, III, 6, 52; Jerome, *Adv. Jovinianum*, I, 2, 26). Still we have here nothing but supposition, although better than Loisy's interpretation of the incident (*Ev. Synopt.*, II, 69): 'Mark is exhorting the Twelve to have due regard for the "little" Apostles; and we may believe that he has in view more especially the "little" Paul, "the least of the Apostles," who was "not worthy to be called an Apostle," but who believed that he had done as much as "the great Apostles," and that he was inferior to them in nothing.' If we discard cloudy dreams of this kind, the Gospel teaching stands out in all its clearness and purity. Against the Apostles' ambition, Christ set the humility of a child. They are the last of all, and are treated as such; in the home, they are the servants of all the rest; and everyone, and themselves first, find it all quite natural. That is the model upon which we must rebuild our lives.

desire of the best places ; he possesses the most precious of all virtues, I mean simplicity, candour, humility ' (568).

After having set little children as a model before His disciples, our Lord adds : '. . . he that receiveth one such little child in My name receiveth Me.' Some commentators have thought that, by those who are thus received in Christ's name, must be meant messengers of Christ. This seems too narrow an interpretation. It is not here a question of the welcome given to a missionary, but to a child ; someone receives and cherishes it, not because it arouses a natural sympathy, but because it has in it something of Christ Himself.[1] In the same way, and with even greater reason, we may give a glass of water to a poor man in the name of Christ. Our Lord is about to continue this instruction by declaring a curse on those who cause scandal, when John causes a diversion by exclaiming : ' Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, who followeth not us : and we forbade him ' (Mark ix, 37).

This is the sole incident in the Synoptics where we see John acting by himself ; and he does so with his usual impetuosity ; so much so, that we have no difficulty in recognizing in him the Apostle who will later display against Cerinthus so vigorous a zeal (*H.E.*, III, 28). On this occasion, our Lord's conciliatory attitude led him to reflect, and to fear that he had shown too much intolerance.

With regard to the man who was casting out devils in Christ's name, we may recall the following incident :

> ' Now some also of the Jewish exorcists, who went about, attempted to invoke over them that had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying : I conjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth. And there were certain

[1] Cp. S. Hilary (*In Matth.*, XVIII, 1 ; P.L., IX, 1018) : ' Non nisi reversos in naturam puerorum introire regnum cælorum Dominus docet, id est, in simplicitatem puerilem vitia corporum nostrorum animæque revocanda. Pueros autem, credentes omnes per audientiæ fidem nuncupavit. Hi enim patrem sequuntur, matrem amant, proximo velle malum nesciunt, curam opum negligunt ; non insolescunt, non oderunt, non mentiuntur, dictis credunt, et quod audiunt verum habent. Et hæc omnium affectionum assumpta in nobis et consuetudo et voluntas cælorum iter pervium præstat. Revertendum igitur est ad simplicitatem infantium quia in ea collocati speciem humilitatis dominicæ circumferemus.' And S. Jerome (128) : ' Sicut iste parvulus, cuius vobis exemplum tribuo, non perseverat in iracundia, non læsus meminit, non videns pulchram mulierem delectatur, non aliud cogitat et aliud loquitur : sic et vos nisi talem habueritis innocentiam et animi puritatem, non poteritis regna cælorum intrare.'

men, seven sons of Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest, that did this. But the wicked spirit, answering, said to them: Jesus I know: and Paul I know. But who are you? And the man in whom the wicked spirit was, leaping upon them and mastering them both, prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.' (Acts xix, 13–16.)

In the case before us at the moment, the exorcisms would seem to have had more felicitous results; but John was angry. Those who are not direct followers of Christ, he thought, had no right to use His name, and so he stopped them. Jesus was more indulgent, and while He would not guarantee the interior dispositions of this self-appointed exorcist, He observed that it was not very probable that a man should be easily led into slander concerning him.[1]

And He added: 'He that is not against you is for you,' words that we have already compared with another, apparently contradictory, utterance of our Lord: 'He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth' (Matt. xii, 30). There was a question of the interior dispositions in each one. Neutrality was what our Lord meant to exclude; a man must belong to Him or be against Him. Here, on the contrary, we are concerned with the external attitude as it is judged by others, in which case is to be exercised the spirit of indulgence which takes the most favourable view as to interior dispositions, and holds everyone who is not an opponent to be a friend.[2]

Resuming the instruction interrupted by John, our Lord continues: 'And whosoever shall scandalize one of these

[1] A similar reply was given by Moses to the youth who came to tell him that the two men, Eldad and Medad, were prophesying. On hearing this news, Josue exclaimed: 'My lord Moses, forbid them;' but Moses replied: 'Why hast thou emulation for me? O that all the people might prophesy, and that the Lord would give them His spirit' (Num. xi, 28–29). Subsequently, it was in the same spirit that S. Paul said: 'Some indeed out of envy and contention, but some also for goodwill preach Christ. . . . But what then? So that by occasion or by truth, Christ be preached: in this also I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice' (Phil. i, 15–18).

[2] Reuss (426) adds with some probability: 'In the decisive moments of life, when it is a question of taking a critical resolution, and when everything depends on the energy and conviction of the will, he who is not for Christ must be looked upon as against Him. But here, where it is a matter of the gradual education of individuals, under providence, a thing so varied in ways and means, we should be wrong indeed to be too exacting at first; we must let a man use as much time as God has given him' (Cp. *supra*, p. 234).

little ones that believe in Me : it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea' (Mark ix, 42. Cp. Matt. xviii, 6, 7, and Luke xvii, 1, 2).[1]

It is a terrible sentence, but it springs from a great love. He who gives His life for His sheep cannot with indifference see them destroyed by scandal. No doubt the 'little ones' spoken of here are children, but also are included all the humble and simple souls, those whom our Lord pronounced blessed in the Sermon on the Mount, and whom the givers of scandal would tear away from Him.[2]

Sometimes an innocent person may cause scandal, as we may see in the life of Christ Himself, at whom the people of Nazareth took offence (Mark vi, 3). But at least He made every effort to prevent it, as in the incident of the two drachmas, and the same vigilant care was enjoined on His followers by S. Paul, so that they should not shock those weak in the faith : Rom. xiv, 21 ; 1 Cor. iii, 13 ; 2 Cor. xi, 29. At the opposite extreme are those who give scandal voluntarily, who not only take no pains to spare their weaker brethren an avoidable scandal, but of set purpose bring it about. On these our Lord's curse falls with all its weight : it would be better for them to be cast into the sea, with millstones round their necks.

In the next few verses of Mark (43–50) and of Matthew (8–9), we shall find again statements of our Lord that we have already met with and commented upon in the Sermon on the Mount : the expediency of depriving ourselves of foot, of hand, of eye, rather than of exposing ourselves to falling for all eternity into the Gehenna of fire ; the uselessness of salt that has lost its savour. And, once again in S. Matthew (xviii, 10–14), our Lord's discourse returns to the proper estimation in which children are to be held.

[1] On the figure here used by our Lord cp. Lagrange : 'While the hand-mill consists of two round stones, the upper crushing the grain on the lower, the mill worked by an ass is a sort of stone cup, with a large hole in the middle through which passes a pivot, also of stone. The grain is poured into the cup, and is crushed against the pivot as the mill turns, this being set in motion by an ass harnessed to the beam of the mill. The perforated cup can be detached and put round a man's neck. . . .' The talmudic expression 'with a millstone round one's neck' must be understood of this sort of mill. We read in *b. Qidduchin* 29b, that a man ought to marry and henceforth study the law. 'But,' remarked R. Joachanan, 'he would be studying the Torah with a millstone round his neck!'

[2] Cp. Clem. Rom., XLVI.

'See that you despise not one of these little ones: for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost. What think you? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them should go astray: doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains and go to seek that which is gone astray? And if it so be that he find it: Amen, I say to you, he rejoiceth more for that than for the ninety-nine that went not astray? Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.' (Matt. xviii, 10–14.)

These exhortations are pressing indeed, but only for those who believe. Angels, and the Heavenly Father Himself, sovereign realities for the Christian, are dreams or mythology for the infidel. In a learned article[1] Moulton has striven to show that the 'angels' spoken of here are the celestial doubles of souls on earth: if these fall, they draw their angels with them in their fall. From phantasies like these it is refreshing to turn again to the Fathers of the Church for an interpretation of the passage in question. Thus, S. Hilary (1020) writes: 'Here Christ puts before us a most powerful motive of love, at least for those who truly believe in Him. The angels of these little ones behold God every day. . . . That the angels are entrusted with the prayers of the faithful is categorically stated by our Lord; so that those saved by Christ see their prayers daily carried by the angels to God. So those put themselves in great peril who despise these children, those whose prayers and aspirations are borne Godward by the ministry and authority of the angels themselves.'[2]

And above the angels, there appears the Heavenly Father Himself. This illustration of the hundred sheep is also recorded by S. Luke (xv, 4) to bring home to us the infinite mercy of God; but it has a peculiar force here, as emphasizing the responsibility before God of those who cause the ruin of the little ones whose salvation is so precious to Him.

And finally, this long discourse of our Lord's concludes with exhortations to mutual charity and forgiveness:

[1] *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1902, pp. 514 ff.
[2] Cp. Jerome, 130; Chrysostom, 579.

'But if thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother. And if he will not hear thee: take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand. And if he will not hear them: tell the church. And if he will not hear the church: let him be to thee as the heathen and publican. Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven. Again I say to you that if two of you shall consent upon earth concerning any thing whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by My Father who is in heaven. For where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.' (Matt. xviii, 15–20.)

The precepts that follow one upon another here are not very closely linked together, the evangelist's chief care being to lose none of our Lord's words. The first is found in two different forms: some read: 'if thy brother hath sinned against thee,' in which case it is a question of the forgiveness of injuries. Others—and this is the most authoritative reading—omit the last two words, when the reference would be to fraternal correction alone. We find the same counsel given in the Judaism of our Lord's time.[1] Before the guilty are punished, they ought to be admonished privately, even in the case of a woman suspected of adultery; but the precept had become a dead letter in practice. In fact, the rabbis used to complain that it was no longer possible to find anyone who would put up with remonstrance of the kind, and still less anyone worthy to give it.[2]

In the Church of Christ, Christian humility and the delicacy born of charity ought to make the thing possible. The admonition would be made discreetly, in the first instance without witness, and then before one or two, according to the spirit of the Mosaic legislation on the point. 'One witness shall not rise up against any man, whatsoever the sin or wickedness be. But in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall stand' (Deut. xix, 15). If this expedient fails, the case is to be referred to the Church, by which Protestant commentators understand the whole body

[1] Edersheim, II, 123. [2] *Sifre, Dt.*, 1,1,1, 64*a*; Billerbeck, I, 788.

of the faithful. So Reuss (432): 'If he will not hear the advice of friends, the matter is to be submitted to the judgement of the entire community, so that public opinion, as we should say, may decide who is in the wrong; and perhaps the unanimity of its expression, in the most widely extended area possible, will produce an impression on him who, up to then, had resisted all the advances that had been made.' This interpretation, rejected by all Catholics, is quite improbable in itself: the Church that is to decide is that hierarchical Church on which Christ conferred, at the same time, the power both to bind and to loose. And Christ, who had previously given this power of binding and loosing to S. Peter, now bestowed it on all the Apostles, as He would do again after He had risen from the dead.

And then He gave His Church yet another promise, that of an intercession, always efficacious, the ground of which is His constant presence in the midst of His faithful people. The rabbis, relying on Mal. iii, 16, loved to say that where two or three Israelites met to pursue the study of the law, God is in their midst.[1] In the very same terms, Christ repeated this promise and applies it to Himself. It is one of the most precious promises that the Gospel contains, and from which the Divine nature of our Redeemer shines forth in the clearest way; for no mere man could give an assurance of such a kind. But neither is there any saying of our Lord's by which we are more forcibly urged to remain united to each other. On the last day of His presence in His glorified humanity here below, Christ would promise His Apostles to be with them unto the consummation of the world. That was the assistance that He would secure to them in their ministry. Here, a similar promise is made to all Christians, in which Christ appears above all as the centre of their religious life, and their intercessor with Almighty God.[2]

[1] *Abot*, 3, 6: cp. Billerbeck, I, 794; Abelson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature* (London, 1912), 131, 230.

[2] These various sayings of Christ have found echo in Christian antiquity. On the subject of fraternal correction we read in *Test., Gad*, VI, 3: 'Love one another from the bottom of your heart, and if any one has sinned against you, speak to him peaceably, and let not deceit or dissimulation hold sway in your soul: and if he repent and confess, forgive him.' On xviii, 20, we may compare the fragmentary *logion* of Oxyrhynchus: 'if any one is alone I am with him; strike the rock and you will find Me; cleave the wood and I am there.' Finally on the subject of Peter, we may compare the following fragment of the Gospel to the Hebrews quoted by Jerome, Matt. xviii, 21, 22; Luke xvii, 3, 4; 'Si peccaverit, inquit, frater tuus in verbo et satis tibi fecerit, septies in die suscipe eum. Dixit

But these sublime promises could not turn away Peter's attention from the precept of forgiveness, so difficult and yet so compelling at the same time. Wishing to know its exact bearing, he asks :

> ' Then came Peter unto Him and said : Lord how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him ? Till seven times ? Jesus saith to him : I say not to thee, till seven times, but till seventy times seven times.' (Matt. xviii, 21, 22.)

In connection with this reply of Peter, S. Hilary long since, and many commentators after him, have recalled the ancient chant of Lamech (Gen. iv, 24) : ' Seven times vengeance shall be taken for Cain ; but for Lamech seventy times sevenfold.'

This is a symbolic expression, describing a large and undefined number, and it may be asked how this duty of limitless pardon is to be reconciled with the requirements of prudence and honour alike.[1] ' If,' says someone, ' I were to grasp the hand of that man, I should be a wretch like him ; ' and, indeed, this attitude would be justified, if the reconciliation offered were merely apparent. But, if the repentance is sincere and efficacious, there is no limit to the duty of forgiveness. Then, our Lord, having thus answered Peter's question, goes on :

> " Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened to a king who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children and all that he had and payment to be made. But that servant falling down besought him, saying : Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with pity, let him go and forgave him the debt. But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow servants that owed him an hundred pence : and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying : Pay what thou owest. And his fellow servant, falling down, besought him, say-

illi Simon, discipulus eius : Septies in die ? Respondit Dominus et dixit ei : Etiam ego dico tibi, usque septuagies septies : etenim in prophetis quoque, postquam uncti sunt spiritu sancto, inventus est sermo peccati,' (*Contra Pelag.*, III, 2.)

[1] Cp. *Ecce Homo*, 295.

ing : Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And he would not : but went and cast him into prison till he paid the debt. Now his fellow servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved ; and they came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him and said to him : Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me : Shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow servant, even as I had compassion on thee ? And his lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt. So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.' (Matt. xviii, 23–35.)

This is one of the most expressive parables in the whole Gospel ; and the more easily grasped by our Lord's hearers, since some features of the story pre-suppose contemporary customs somewhat different from those of our own time. With the Jews, as with other ancient peoples, a whole family shared in the responsibility of the debts of its head. In this connection we may recall the story of the widow :

'Now a certain woman of the wives of the prophets cried to Eliseus, saying : Thy servant my husband is dead. And thou knowest that thy servant was one that feared God : and behold the creditor is come to take away my two sons to serve him.' (4 Kings iv, 1.)

We find similar incidents of collective punishment in Daniel vi, 24, and Esther xvi, 18 ; etc. All the same, the magnitude of the debt was not exceptional ; and Knabenbauer mentions parallel facts. Joseph, Onias' grandson, bought the taxation of Syria, Phenice and Palestine for 16,000 talents ; Suetonius wrote of Nero (30) that he had given to Tiridates 300,000 *denarii* a day and that, at his departure, he gave him more than a million *sestertii* ; Tacitus (*Hist.*, I, 20) : 'Nero spent twenty-two million *sestertii* in gifts.' At this period and in those countries where kings made their slaves or freemen their ministers of finance, a debt of 10,000 talents (50 or 60 million francs[1]) was

[1] These are the equivalents given in the French original, which was written about 1929 ; owing to the changes in all currencies since 1914, it is impracticable to give any accurate English equivalent ; in any case, it should be remembered that such estimates of the present-day value of ancient monetary units are necessarily only conjectural.

nothing improbable. But these immense fortunes disappeared in the same way that they grew. A royal caprice disgraced the minister and compelled him to disgorge his wealth ; more often than not, he was found to be insolvent, and there followed the distraint and imprisonment with which the servant in the Gospel was threatened. On the other hand, the debt of the fellow-servant was extremely moderate—about 80 francs[1]—but it is exacted with severity. Whereupon Almighty God once more applied the rule but lately laid down on the Mount : with what measure a man metes, it shall be measured to him again. And at the same time is made plain the immense disproportion between Divine and human credit, and what folly it is for one who is God's debtor to be so exacting a creditor, when all the time he knows that he is insolvent himself.

It was on this note, echoing the Sermon on the Mount, that this conversation with the Apostles came to an end. Immediately afterwards, S. Matthew relates Christ's going up to Jerusalem, preceding by a few months the going up to Calvary itself. The conversations on which we have been commenting have had for their setting Capharnaum and ' the house,' no doubt Peter's. It is the last time that our Lord will hold converse with the Apostles, in these familiar spots where all their youth had been spent, where they had heard His call, had witnessed His first miracles, and had listened to His earlier discourses ; now, that time of slow and patient training is past. Later, they will understand its full value, and will feel all the charm of those long months, passed in intimate converse with the Lord. In memory will they see again Capharnaum, and the lake and the boat, and the house and the mountain, and the thousand details that seemed so simple to them then, and that are so full of treasures that will never have an end.

[1] See footnote on the previous page.

ABBREVIATIONS OF THE TITLES OF WORKS FREQUENTLY QUOTED

D.A.	*Dictionnaire apologétique.*
D.B.	*Dictionary of the Bible* (Hastings).
H.E.	*Historia Ecclesiastica* (Eusebius).
J.T.S.	*Journal of Theological Studies.*
R.B.	*Revue biblique.*
R.G.G.	*Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart.*
R.S.R.	*Recherches de science religieuse.*
Z.K.T.	*Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie.*
Z.n.t.W.	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft.*

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